BRITISH MILITARY MARKINGS

1939-1945

Peter Hodges

ALMARK PUBLICATIONS

British Military Markings

ABOUT THIS BOOK

British Military Markings presents for the first time a really thorough and comprehensive guide to the marking systems adopted for British military vehicles in World War 2. While documentation is already available on divisional badges and other formation signs, there has previously been no readily available book explaining the complications of the arm-of-service signs and the unit serial system which provided a coded identification guide for traffic and tactical purposes. This system is bewildering to the layman—as indeed it was intended to be—but becomes quite logical and easy to follow once the breakdown is demonstrated in tabular form. This book covers that aspect of the subject in immense detail with the numbering system shown for all arms of the service. Similarly the system of tactical markings used mainly by armour and artillery units is also shown in great detail. Much of this information is presented for the first time after years of research by the author who has also been assisted in part by other specialists in this field. Much supplementary information is given also, ranging from positions for gas detector patches to the semaphore and flag signal codes for tanks. The book is profusely illustrated with war-time pictures and many line drawings. Finally, 7 pages in full colour show over 130 signs, or groups of signs, as covered in the text. This is a most indispensible book for all tank and military vehicle enthusiasts, wargamers, and modellers.

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Peter Hodges

Colour art by Kenneth M. Jones
Line drawings by Gerald Scarborough

ALMARK PUBLISHING CO. LTD., LONDON

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First Published—May 1971

ISBN 0 85524 028 8 (hard cover edition)
ISBN 0 85524 29 6 (paper covered edition)

Printed in Great Britain by
Martins Press Ltd., London EC1,
for the publishers, Almark Publishing Co. Ltd.,
104-106 Watling Avenue, Edgware,
Middlesex, England.

Introduction

THIS publication deals with the large variety of markings on British military vehicles during the Second World War, together with some notes on those used before 1939.

It has been compiled from a number of sources, but I am particularly indebted to Peter Leslie of Belfast and to Gordon Ketteringham of Wimbledon, for their generosity in allowing me freedom to use their painstakingly collected material. The assistance of Peter Chamberlain is acknowledged for the selection of photographs.

Those who take up this absorbing subject should be warned that like many carefully pre-arranged schemes, the precise rules governing vehicle markings were frequently bent if not completely broken; and that it is therefore unwise to be dogmatic when discussing the matter as a whole. Rather, this book gives the outline of the regulations within whose confines there were many official and unofficial variations. Absolute uniformity is difficult enough to implement in peace-time; in wartime it is often quite impossible.

For tactical reasons, markings were often temporarily obliterated before battle; sometimes they became obscured by dust and mud; and eventually when repainted, were 'touched up' with any near-colour which happened to be available at the time.

Research is hindered to a degree by the fact that wartime photographs usually received the attention of the censor, so that although the original in fact showed standard marks, the published photographs did not. Even the basic colour of military vehicles suffered beneath the paint-brushes of their crews, not only for camouflage, but for other much less likely reasons. For instance, all the tanks of the Guards Armoured Division found themselves in Cuxhaven at the end of the war in Europe, and the only paint for a quick tidy-up for the Farewell Parade was naval grey which happened to be available in quantity. When the armoured battalions were drawn up for inspection, their tanks and SP guns were gleaming like so many warships on Navy Days; a novel but not entirely improper appearance, when one considers that the tank owed its origins to the deliberations of the Admiralty Land Ship Committee.

The source of the illustrations is credited with each caption, and in the case of Imperial War Museum (IWM) photographs, the number is given, if known. These are available from: The Photo Library, Imperial War Museum, Lambeth, London, S.E.1, England, at 15p (40 cents) per 6" × 4" size print. Orders should quote the reference number and include postage.

CONTENTS

Section	Page
Introduction	3
Part 1: Military Formations	5
Part 2: Formation Signs	9
Part 3: Arm of Service Marks	12
Part 4: Tactical Signs	15
Part 5: Other Vehicle Marks	40
Part 6: Guide to Vehicle Markings (Tables)	46
Appendices	59
Colour Plates	*Cover, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29*

ABOVE: Covenanter of the HQ Squadron wearing the badge of the Guards Armoured Division and the arm of service mark and serial (53) indicating the 3rd armoured regiment in the 5th Guards Armoured Brigade. This was the 2nd (Armoured) Battalion, Irish Guards. It is interesting to note that a miniature arm of service sign is painted on the driver's helmet. The commander is about to make a signal with his pennants (IWM-BH11257).

FRONT COVER: A Valentine tank of 6th Armoured Division on October 2, 1941, during a training exercise when it depicted an enemy vehicle as denoted by the white cross. It also displays the divisional formation sign, a white HQ Squadron tactical sign, and a large bridge marking (16 on a yellow disc with white surround). No unit serial is visible (Chamberlain Collection).

BACK COVER: Another Covenanter, this time of 1st Armoured Division, with the bridge mark (16) central and the arm of service sign and unit serial to the left. It is interesting to note that this serial (52) is also featured in the central headlamp masking.

Part 1: Military Formations

THE most wide-ranging of the several individual marks on military vehicles was that which denoted its Arm of Service, so in clarification of the tables it is necessary to deal with the composition of army formations in the Second World War.

The largest comprised a number of Armies, and the 21st Army Group, NW Europe 1944, was typical. This was formed from the 2nd British Army and the 1st Canadian Army, taking its Group number from those digits.

An Army was made up of a number of Corps and these in turn by a number of Divisions, but only the latter had a completely established composition.

Table 1 shows the formation which formed the Second British Army in July/August 1944. It will be seen that in this case there were three Corps, but

TABLE 1

SECOND BRITISH ARMY

8 CORPS	12 CORPS	30 CORPS
11th Armd Div	53rd (Welsh) Div	7th Armd Div
Guard's Armd Div	59th Div	43rd (Wessex) Div
15th (Scottish) Div	31st Tank Bde	50th (Northumbrian) Div
6th (Guard's) Tank Bde		8th Armd Bde

notice that their individual components differed considerably; 8 Corps had a heavy preponderance of armour; 30 Corps was more balanced; while 12 Corps had only two Infantry Divisions and a Tank Brigade. Tank Brigades were usually independent formations, whose function was of the support of infantry, and it will be noted that each of the three Corps listed had such a component.

In Table 2 a typical Corps strength is shown, and also the relative strengths

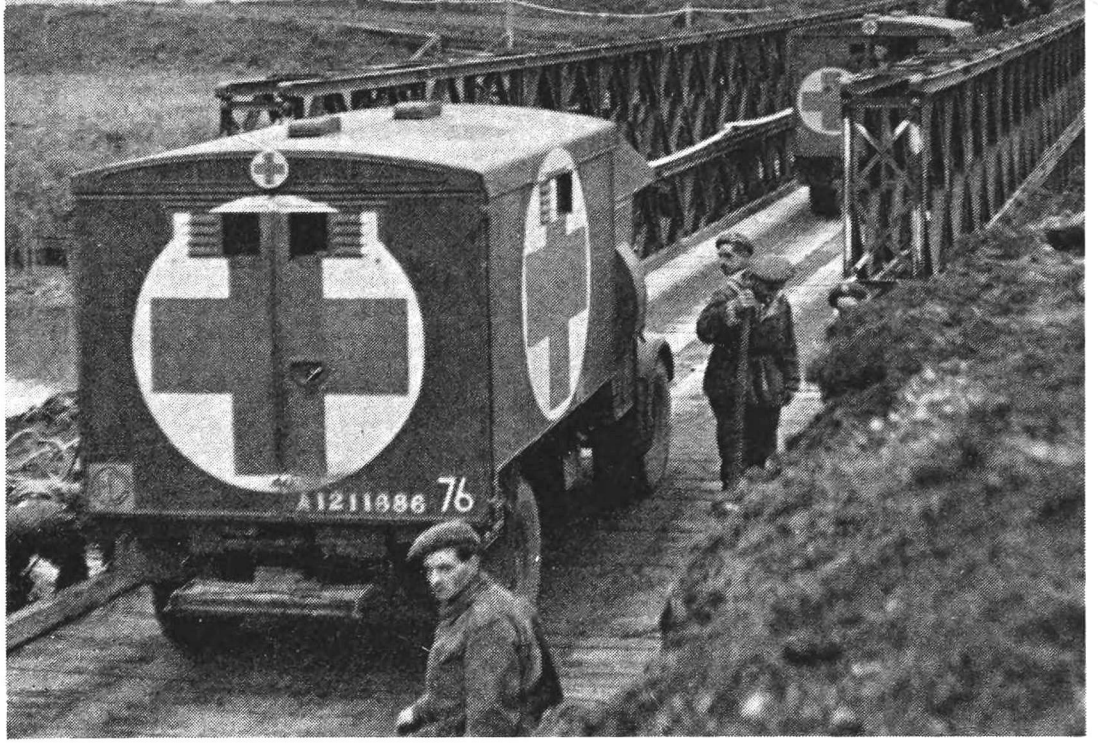
TABLE 2

TYPICAL CORPS STRENGTH*
8 CORPS

	Officers	Other Ranks
HQ 8 Corps and 8 Corps Troops	596	10,833
15th (Scottish) Div	829	15,141
8th Army Group, RA	214	4,643
6th (Guard's) Tank Bde	199	3,901
11th Armd Div	715	13,788
2nd Household Cavalry Regt	58	738
Guard's Armd Div	730	13,670
The Inns of Court Regt	55	765
Totals	3,396	64,479

** For Order of Battle see Appendix 3*

of its various units, whose numerical composition was more or less standard. Thus one could expect to find about 16,000 men in an Infantry Division, 13,500 in an Armoured Division, 4,000 in a Tank Brigade, and 750 in an Armoured Regiment.



Two ambulances of the 51st Highland Division traversing a Bailey Bridge. Notice the differing Red Cross marks on the rear and also that the arm of service serial number is transposed between the two.

The command of these formations followed this pattern

Army	—	General
Corps	—	Lieutenant-General
Division	—	Major-General
Brigade	—	Brigadier
Regiment/Battalion	—	Lieutenant-Colonel

It will be observed that the full Colonel does not appear in this list, but officers of that rank commanded units of the services—eg, Royal Artillery—which made up the Division.

A separate entity was the 'Colonel of the Regiment'—an honorary title held by distinguished General Officers and often by members of the Royal Family.

DIVISIONS

THE Division was normally the smallest army formation which was entirely self-supporting, although some Independent Brigades of similar composition also existed. The two principle types of Division were the Armoured and the Infantry, and it was the units of these which carried the often bewildering array of markings.

Table 3 shows the development of the Armoured Division from its beginnings in 1938. Until 1942 it contained—as one might expect—a very heavy preponderance of tanks, but the North Africa campaign showed that much more Infantry support was required than was at first provided. In consequence the balance tended to shift as the war progressed until an integrated fighting force of Armour and Infantry evolved.

From Table 3 it can be seen that the Division was made up of separate Brigades, and that these in turn usually had three Regiments under the command of a Brigadier. In addition, there was a Support Group in the early days, but this disappeared in 1942 when one of the original Armoured Brigades was replaced by Infantry.

TABLE 3 **1938-44**

THE ARMOURED DIVISION

1938

	HQ Mobile Div		
Cavalry Bde 3 × Regts (Light tanks)	Cavalry Bde 3 × Regts (Light tanks)	Tank Bde 1 × Batt (Light tanks) 3 × Batts (Mixed light and cruiser tanks)	Div Troops' 1 × Armd Car Regt 2 × RHA Regt 2 × Motor Batts 1 × Field Sq, RE

1939

	HQ Armd Div			
Light Armd Bde 3 × Regts (Light tanks)	Heavy Armd Bde 3 × Batts (Cruiser tanks)	Support Group RHA Regt	Motor Batt	Field Sq RE

Early 1940

	HQ Armd Div			
Armd Bde 3 × Regts (Mixed light and cruiser tanks)	Armd Bde 3 × Regts (Mixed light and cruiser tanks)	Support Group RHA Regt	Mixed LAA and A/T Regt	2 × Motor Batts

Late 1940

		HQ Armd Div				
Armd Car Regt	Armd Bde 3 × Armd Regts 1 × Motor Batt	Armd Bde 3 × Armd Regts 1 × Motor Batt	Support Group RHA Regt	A/T Regt	2 × Field Sq RE	Lorried Inf. Batt

1942

		HQ Armd Div				
Armd Car Regt	Armd Bde 3 × Armd Regs	Lorried Inf Batt	2 × RHA Regts	RA LAA Regt	A/T Regt	RE 2 × Field Sqs 1 × Field Park Sq

1943

		HQ Armd Div		
Armd Recce Regt	HQ Armd Bde 3 × Armd Regts 1 × Motor Batt	HQ Inf Bde 3 × Inf Batts with Inf Bde Support Group	HQ Div RA 1 × RHA Regt (towed) 1 × RHA Regt (SP) 1 × A/T Regt 1 × LAA Regt	HQ Div RE 2 × Field Sq 1 × Field Park Sq

1944

		HQ Armd Div (Note 4)				
Armd Car Regt. (Note 1)	Armd Recce Regt (Note 2)	HQ Armd Bde	HQ Inf Bde	Indep M/G Coy	HQ RA	HQ RE
		3 × Armd Regts 1 × Motor Batt (Note 3)	3 × Inf Batts		As 1943	As 1943 plus 1 × Bridging Troop

Note (1) Corps troops, but allocated to the division on a more-or-less permanent basis.
(2) Armd Recce Regt became 4th Armd Regt in Armd Bde.
(3) Total of 300 tanks,
8 OP tanks,
23 AA tanks.
(4) 8 tanks and 2 AA tanks attached.

REGIMENTS AND BATTALIONS

NUMERICALLY, these were more or less identical. When a Regiment expanded it was split into Battalions of sensibly equal strength, but this was mostly restricted to the Infantry Regiments of the Regular Army, the Royal Tank Regiment, and the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Rarely, if ever, were cavalry units

A Valentine tank of 8th Armoured Division on a publicity tour of Bristol in September 1941. A paper sticker carries the type name on the nose for exhibition purposes. The divisional formation sign ('GO') is on the far right, the name 'Rodney' appears on the nose and the serial 53 (deleted by the censor) under the black mark on the left. This identifies the unit as 50th RTR (third regiment of 23rd Armoured Brigade). Note the 'A' Squadron marking on the turret.

so divided. Hence we see from Table 3 that the Cavalry Brigades comprised three (ex-Cavalry) *Regiments* of light tanks, while the Tank Brigade comprised a *Battalion* of light tanks and three *Battalions* of mixed tanks—these being sub-divisions of the Royal Tank Regiment.

Some of the horsed cavalry regiments of the Regular Army were amalgamated before or after they became mechanized and were then known by a combined number like 4th/7th Dragoon Guards, 13th/18th Hussars and 17th/21st Lancers.

Their Territorial Army cavalry counterparts were usually known as 'Yeomanry', although some had splendidly distinctive titles like 'The Lothian and Border Horse' and 'The North Irish Horse'.

In April 1939, all the regular cavalry regiments, the yeomanry regiments and the Royal Tank Regiment became grouped together under the overall title of Royal Armoured Corps, and during the war, several new battalions were raised under this title—for example the 144th RAC.

SUB-DIVISIONS IN REGIMENTS AND BATTALIONS

THE armoured regiments retained their old cavalry terminology, and were split into Squadrons and Troops; the Artillery Regiments were split into Batteries and Troops; while the Infantry Regiment was divided into Companies, Platoons and Sections.

The composition of these sub-divisions is shown in Appendices 4, 5 and 6 (page 61). Sufficient to say, at this point, that a tank, for instance, was so marked as to make it possible to see to what Troop, Squadron, Regiment, Brigade and Division it belonged.

Part 2: Formation Signs

THIS sign showed the Formation which administered the particular vehicle, thus:

Army Group	—	HQ vehicles.
Army	—	HQ vehicles and Army Troops vehicles.
Corps	—	HQ vehicles and Corps Troops vehicles.
Division	—	All vehicles under Divisional Command.
Independent Brigade	—	All vehicles under Brigade Command.
District (eg, Aldershot)	—	Establishment transport of units administered by the District GOC.
Command (eg, Southern Command)	—	Establishment transport of units administered by the GOC-in-C of the Command.

As we have seen, the Division was made up of Brigades, and although these often had their own Formation Sign, it was not normally worn on vehicles, since they were under the overall command of the Division. However, there were exceptions to this rule, and one is illustrated on page 29, where the signs

In October 1941, 1st Armoured Division moved to North Africa where this Cruiser Tank Mk IV is being unloaded on to a flat car for transport inland. The serial 61 indicates the senior regiment of 23rd Armoured Brigade in this instance.

General Montgomery in his famous Humber staff car 'Old Faithful', September 1944. The formation sign indicates HQ 21st Army Group and the car also displays the American style 'four-star general' insignia plate (IWM).

of the 22nd Armoured Brigade and its parent formation the 7th Armoured Division are both worn.

On the other hand, the vehicles of an *Independent* Brigade carried their own Brigade sign and might also wear the markings of the Corps to which they were attached.

Another unusual series was used by Southern Command in the United Kingdom. It was shield-shaped as a shoulder flash, and rectangular on vehicles, when there were four stars in the vertical limb. Some examples of the division of the Shield can be seen on page 25, and the full list appears in Table 4. Formation signs were worn on the front and the rear of tracked and wheeled

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TABLE 4

SOUTHERN COMMAND (UK)—THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Unit	Shield	Stars
Command HQ	Red, Black bar	White
RA	Divided vertically, left Red, right Blue	White
Royal Signals	Divided vertically, left Dark Blue, right White	White and Blue, Dark Blue on White
RE	Red with Blue diagonal bar, top left to bottom right	White
RAC	Divided vertically, left Red, right Yellow	Red on Yellow, Yellow on Red
Infantry	Red	White
Royal Army Medical Corps	Maroon	White
RASC	Divided vertically, left Dark Blue, right yellow	Yellow on Dark Blue, Dark Blue on Yellow
RAOC	Red with central vertical Black bar	White
REME	Divided on three vertical bars, left Red, centre Yellow, right Dark Blue	Dark Blue on central bar, White on sides
RMP	Divided vertically, left Red, right Black	White
Royal Army Dental Corps	Divided vertically, left Green, right White	White on Green Green on White
Royal Army Pay Corps	Yellow	Blue
Royal Army Educational Corps	Cambridge Blue	White
Royal Pioneer Corps	Divided vertically, left Green, right Red	White
Intelligence Corps	Green	White
Army PT Corps	Black	Red
ATS	Dark Brown with narrow Green edging	Beech Brown

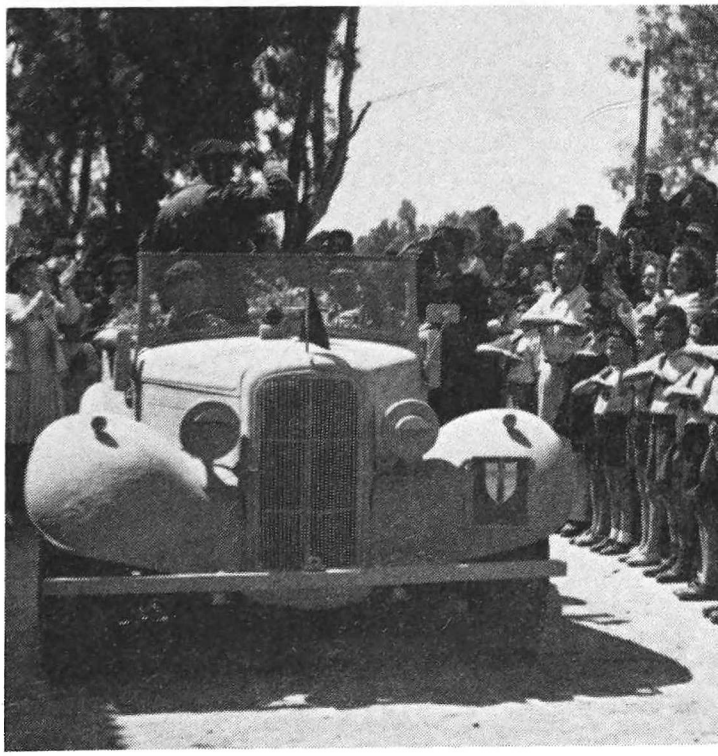
Note: See page 25 for typical shield divisions.

This picture shows very well the varied positions of the markings on vehicles within the same unit. These are Cromwells and Challengers of the 8th Hussars, the armoured reconnaissance regiment of 7th Armoured Division (IWM).

vehicles, but the position varied enormously. Sometimes it was on the right-hand side, sometimes on the left and sometimes centrally placed. Not infrequently it even appeared in different positions on the vehicles of an individual unit, as can be seen in the accompanying photograph of the Cromwell tanks.

The motif of the Formation Sign might be quite simple—like 'HD' for the Highland Division—but other examples were complex, cryptic and comical. The 9th Armoured Division Panda was a pun on 'Panzer'; the 23rd Armoured Brigade chose the imaginary Liver Bird, because of its associations with Liverpool; that of 12 Corps—'The Oak, the Ash and the Thorn'—alluded both to its commander, Major General Thorne, and to those trees in Kipling's *Puck of Pooks Hill*, supposedly in the area where the Corps was raised.

The personnel of the Formation wore the same, or a very similar, badge as a shoulder flash beneath their regimental title.



An earlier picture of 'Old Faithful' in Italy in March 1943. It displays the famous 8th Army formation sign on a reversible plate (which would have had 'PASS' on the other side). Vehicle is stone overall (IWM-NA1712).

Part 3: Arm of Service Marks

THESE were coloured squares which denoted the regiment or service to which the vehicle belonged within its Administrative Formation. All are shown in colour on page 25 and each had a number superimposed on it. The numbers varied during the war, but examples of specific allocations are given in the 'break downs' of the various formations. White digits were used in all cases except for the Royal Corps of Signals which, exceptionally, used red because its Arm of Service mark was itself half white.

To make them more quickly recognisable an additional white band was added to the basic colour square, thus:

Below for Army Units.
Above for Corps Units.
Diagonal for GHQ and Command Troops.

See diagram, page 58

Like the Formation Sign, the position of the Arm of Service mark varied. Usually the two were on opposite sides, but in North Africa, both were amalgamated in a single mark. This arrangement was retained throughout the war in Europe by some units of the 7th Armoured Division. They had gained

A Staghound armoured car of 7th Armoured Division, the serial 40 indicating divisional HQ. This division commonly painted the formation and arm of service signs in a single panel. Disc high on the nose is the gas detector patch (IWM-BU769).

ABOVE: White Scout Car of the officer commanding (OC) 1st (Motor) Battalion, Grenadier Guards, 1944. The arm of service panel is on a reversible plate and the Guards Armoured Division formation sign is clearly shown. OC is a good example of a local non-standard tactical sign (IWM-BH11258).

BELOW: A Staghound in Egypt in 1946 displaying the formation sign (a camel) of Middle East Land Forces and an arm of service badge which features the white bar of area, garrison, or army troops. The post-war RAC red/yellow Arm of Service mark is shown here with its diagonal division reversed probably for neatness with the diagonal bar.

Arm of service and formation sign combined on a carrier of No. 3 Support Group, Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, 7th Armoured Division in 1944 (IWM-BU5113).

world renown as the famous 'Desert Rats', and none could deny them the privilege of a certain individuality.

At one time during the early part of the war, the Arm of Service mark took the form of a reversible plate, fitted into a holder, one side displaying the appropriate mark and number. The other had the word 'Pass' in white on a khaki background, and this aspect was shown in the event of a mechanical breakdown. The arrangement did not survive for very long, and the Arm of Service mark was then painted directly on to the vehicle body.

From 1940, the personnel of the various units wore narrow coloured cloth strips horizontally on the upper sleeve of their uniforms immediately below their Formation Badge. These corresponded in colour to the vehicle marks, and in the case of the Infantry, one, two or three scarlet strips were worn, depending on the seniority of their particular Brigade.

A Diamond T transporter in March 1945. Notice the tractor number is duplicated on the bonnet and on the cab door. The words 'Convoy Serial No' are painted permanently on the front bumper; there is a double bridge mark, and the arm of service mark has a diagonal white bar, indicating a GHQ vehicle. Observe, too, that the four tyres are of different pattern (IWM-BU2043).

Part 4: Tactical Signs

ARMOURED UNITS

THE next series of markings denoted the function of a vehicle within its own Regiment. In the case of AFV's each of the squadrons had a geometric symbol, shown in Figs 86 to 90 on page 25; and earlier the Support Company of the Lorried Infantry Battalion in the Armoured Division was similarly marked with a solid horizontal oblong.

Just before the outbreak of World War 2, these marks were ordered to be displayed on the rear of tanks as a removable plate, but later on they were painted as outline shapes on the hull front and rear, and also on the sides of the turret.

Officially they should have conformed to a colour scheme of red for the senior, yellow for the second, and blue for the junior regiment in the Brigade, with green for the fourth regiment if this existed, but these instructions were frequently disregarded. Some COs used the colours to distinguish the Squadrons within each regiment, with white 'tac signs' for Regimental Headquarters, and others were even less specific. For example, the 5th Battalion RTR, in the 1st Armoured Brigade of 1st Armoured Division in France, 1939-40, had purple signs throughout.

Within these shapes, a number was often displayed, but again—and

(continued on page 18)

Cruiser tanks of the 1st Armoured Division exercising early in 1941. These are 'C' Squadron vehicles of the 3rd armoured regiment in the division's second armoured brigade. They are believed to be 6th RTR. Note the simplified style of formation sign (IWM-BH554).

Typical vehicle name sequences: 'Southwark', 'Southport' and 'Stafford' on LVT (A) 4s of 79th Armoured Division. Note the 'C' Squadron marking and the 1B, 1C, etc., tactical signs which were commonly used on post-war vehicles in British service (IWM-BU4789).

BELOW: A Comet tank of 2nd Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, 11th Armoured Division with markings displayed in what became nearest to standardised positions. Date was May 1945 (IWM-BU2756).

Army and Corps Signs

(1) H.Q. 21st Army Group. (2) 1st Army. (3) 2nd Army. (4) 8th Army. (5) 14th Army. (6) 5 Corps. (7) 1 Corps. (8) 10 Corps. (9) 3 Corps. (10) 8 Corps. (11) 4 Corps. (12) 12 Corps. (13) 13 Corps. (14) 30 Corps.

(continued from page 15)

maddeningly to the tidy-minded!—these also suffered from the whims of the Commanding Officer concerned. Some units showed 'CO' or '2ic' in the same or different colours from the basic shape, with the Troop Leaders' tanks marked from 1 in A Squadron to 12 in C; some numbered the troops from 1 to 4 or 5 in each squadron; others again numbered each tank in the regiment consecutively from 1 to 60 odd.

When wireless communication procedure was revised during the later stages of the war, letters as well as, or instead of, numbers appeared within the squadron mark. One then saw 1 as the senior Troop leader, followed by 1A, 1B, 1C; 2, 2A, 2B, 2C for the next Troop, and so on. Alternatively a letter only might appear. This system of marking remained in use post-war.

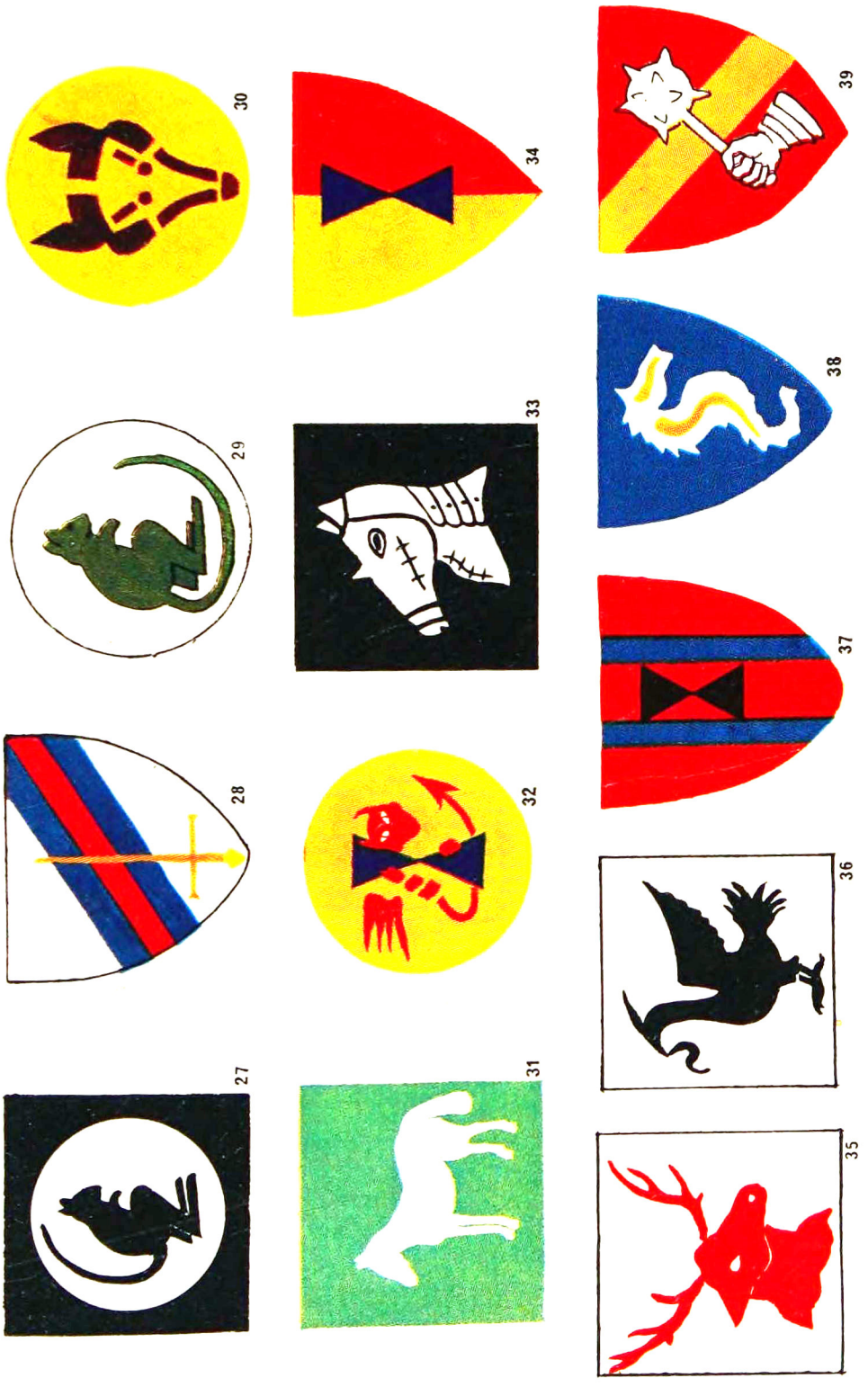
Altogether the system—if it can be so called—was so full of variables as to make it very nearly impossible to follow its complicated path. However, it should be realised that these particular signs were of interest only to the members of the regiment itself, and provided its individuals knew their own scheme, how they elected to bend the rules was of little consequence.

BELOW: A Humber scout car of 11th Armoured Division in May 1945. Note the toy bear on the radio aerial. The Comet tank beyond it appears to be a replacement vehicle with the serial and other markings painted out. Unit number is, however, chalked in place (IWM-BU2758).

ABOVE AND BELOW: Typical tank markings in 1941 during an exercise at Toddington. These 6th Armoured Division Valentines carry formation signs, bridge classification mark and squadron tactical symbol but no unit serials. Vehicle below also has an 'enemy cross'. Note the Vauxhall staff car with the mural crown and sword formation sign of London District—it has evidently brought up observers from the War Office.

Divisional Signs

(15) 2nd Armd. Div. (16) 1st Armd. Div. (17) 6th Armd. Div. (18) Mobile Div., 1938-39. (19) The Armd. Div. (Egypt, Jan. 1939 to Aug. 1939); 7th Armd. Div., Aug. 1939. (20) 7th Armd. Div., later style. (21) 8th Armd. Div. (22) 9th Armd. Div. (23) 10th Armd. Div. (24) 11th Armd. Div. (25) 79th Armd. Div. (26) Guard's Armd. Div.



Armoured Brigades

(27) 4th Armd. Bde. (28) 6th (Guards') Tank Bde. (29) 7th Armd. Bde. (30) 8th Armd. Bde.
(31) 9th Armd. Bde. (32) 16th Armd. Bde. (33) 20th Armd. Bde. (34) 21st Army Tank Bde.
(35) 22nd Armd. Bde. (36) 23rd Armd. Bde. (37) 25th Armd. Engineer Bde. (38) 27th Armd. Bde.
(39) 34 Armd. Bde.

Shermans of 'C' Squadron, The Queen's Bays, at Alamein in October 1942. The Regiment was part of 2nd Armoured Brigade of the 1st Armoured Division. Notice especially the identical pattern of the camouflage scheme and the chassis left in olive drab. Note the 'blocked' style of the squadron symbols (IWM-BM20485).

RIGHT: Rear view of a Cromwell of Guards Armoured Division showing arm of service sign, unit serial (Recce Regiment), squadron sign, and formation sign—with only the 'eye' visible—on the extreme left (IWM).

LEFT: A Stuart (Honey) of the Polish Armoured Division, with all its main markings close together on the nose, and the squadron marking on the glacis. The censor has deleted the unit serial (IWM).

A 17-pdr Archer SP gun displaying the standard markings for the A/T Regiment of an Infantry Division—in this case the black lion rampant in a yellow circle on a black square of the 15th (Scottish) Division. Notice the battery square on the RA tactical mark (IWM).

ROYAL ARTILLERY

A number of examples of RA 'tac signs' appear on page 28. These were worn as well as the Arm of Service mark and were sometimes joined to it. They were mostly painted directly on to mudguards, but occasionally were on removable metal plates, especially on 'Quad' tractors.

Figs 96 to 99 show that each Battery was distinguished by a red quadrant which moved clockwise around the background blue square. White letters and numbers were superimposed on the Battery signs to denote the particular rôle of the vehicle. In the Field Artillery these were at first painted across the complete mark, but in the AA branch, they were made somewhat clearer by appearing only on the blue background. Many Field Units eventually adopted the AA style.

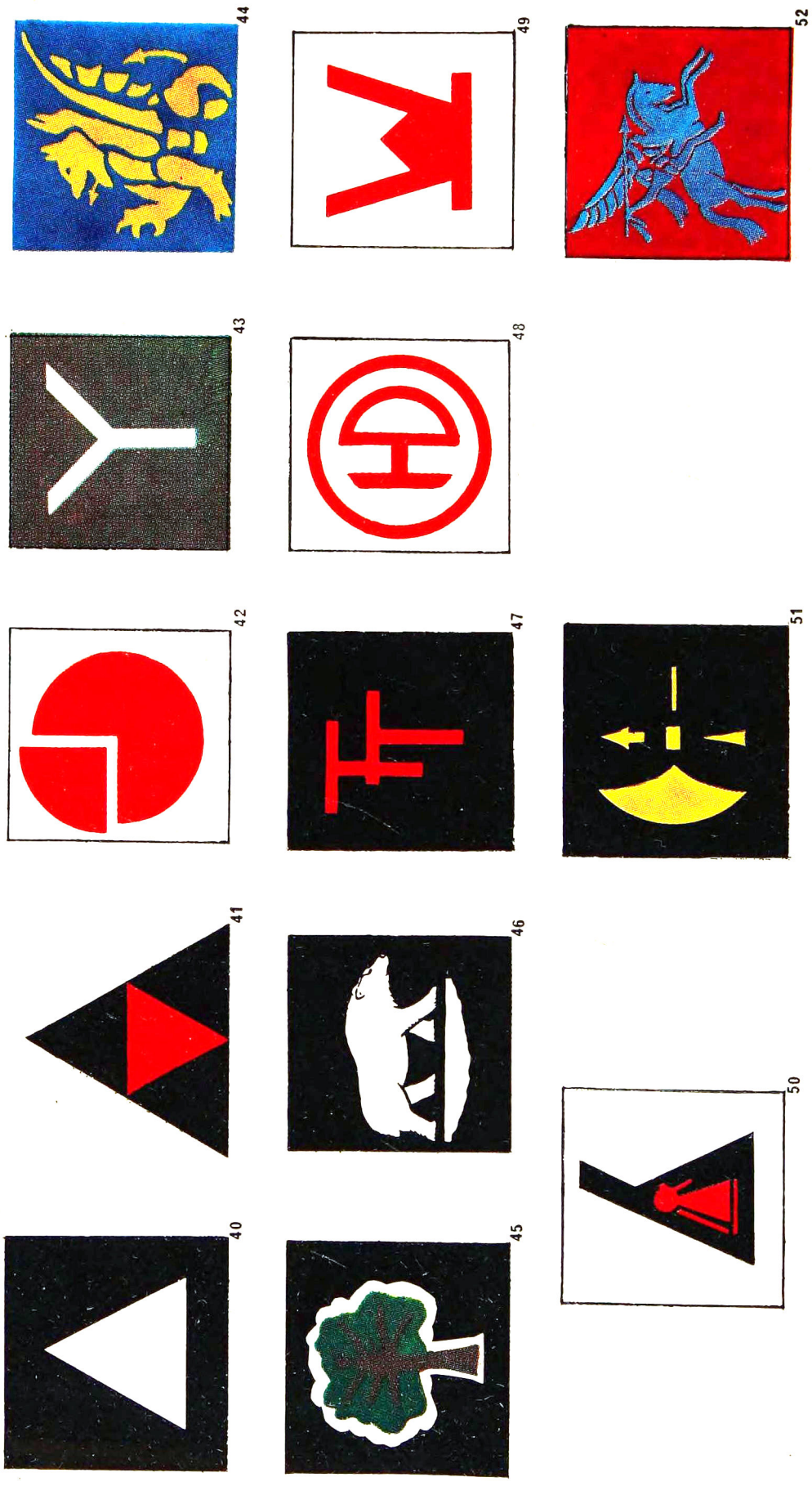
Table 5A shows a typical allocation of letters and associated vehicles in RHQ (including the Royal Signals Section attached, which it will be noted in this case, wore RA and not Royal Signals colours). Similarly, the Light Aid Detachment also wore red/blue colours, but when this later became a REME unit, its own Arm of Service colours were adopted. Two styles of LAD marks are shown—one above the Arm of Service mark, and the other as a separate Tac mark.

Table 5B shows some typical Battery and Troop identification symbols. Neither these marks nor Formation signs appeared on the guns and limbers of the Field branch, although the gun letter alone—A, B, etc—was often painted on the muzzle cover.

In the AA branch, on the other hand, Tac, Arm of Service and Formation signs were painted on the gun carriages, Table 5C, showing an actual example of the Tac symbols.

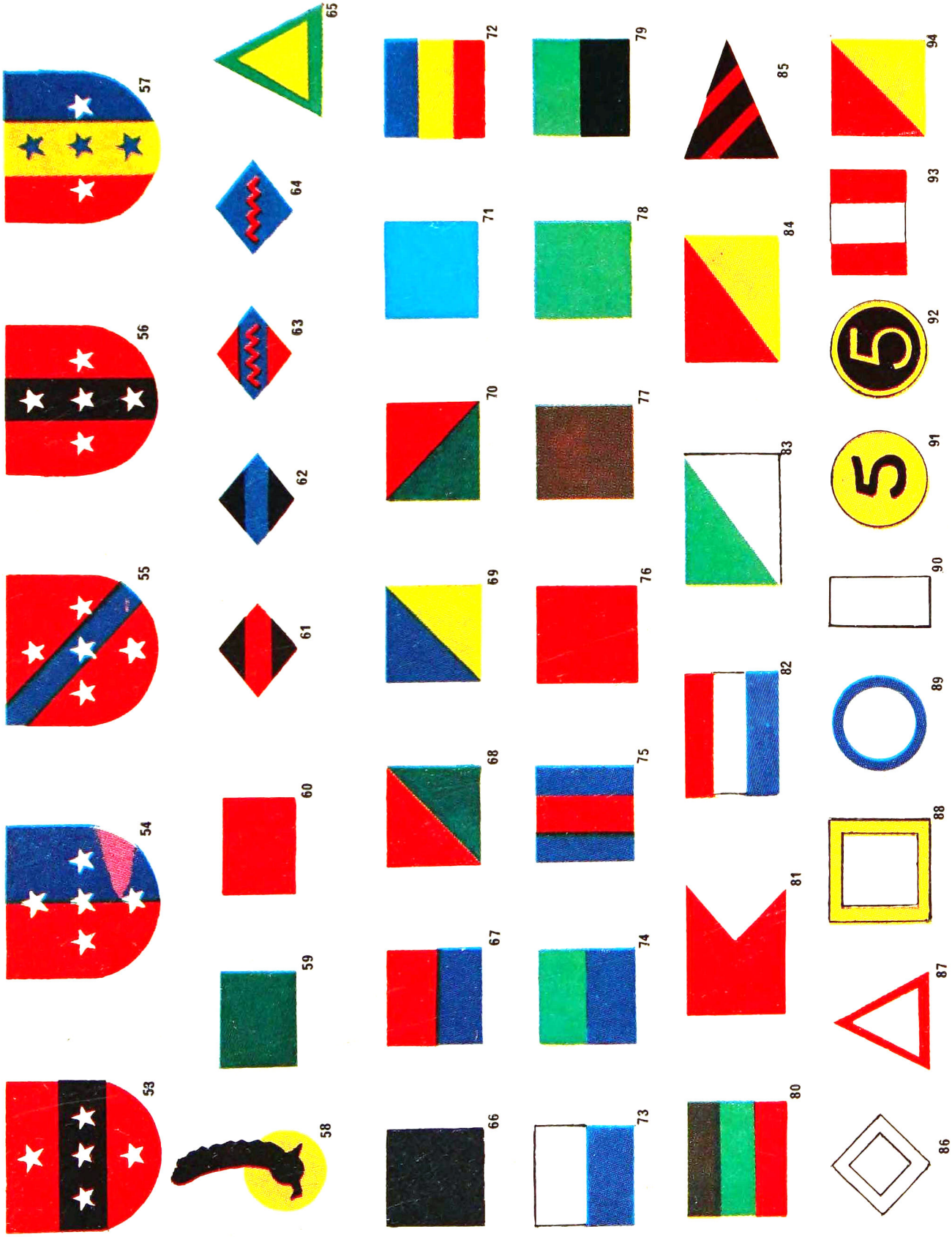
The use of a 'T' prefix for gun tractors was peculiar to the AA branch, and was not used elsewhere. An example of the sixteen AEC 'Matador' tractors' markings in a Medium Regiment is shown separately in Table 5D, together with notes detailing alternative arrangements.

In A/T regiments, both tractor and gun carriages were numbered: A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, etc, but as in the Field branches, other signs were not painted on the towed guns. In the case of SP equipment all the usual vehicle markings were carried.



Infantry Divisions

(40) 1st Div. (41) 3rd Div. (42) 4th Div. (43) 5th Div. (44) 43rd (Wessex) Div. (45) 46th (N. Midland) Div. (46) 49th (W. Riding) Div. (47) 50th (Northumbrian) Div. (48) 51st (Highland) Div. (49) 53rd (Welsh) Div. (50) 59th Div. (51) 78th Div. (52) The Airborne Div. (and other Airborne units).



Commands and Divisions

(53) Command H.Q., Southern Command. (54) R.A. Southern Command. (55) R.E. Southern Command. (56) R.A.O.C. Southern Command. (57) R.E.M.E. Southern Command. (58) Polish Armd. Div. (59) 4th Canadian Armd. Div. (60) 1st Canadian Armd. Div. (61) 1st Canadian Armd. Bde. (62) 2nd Canadian Armd. Bde. (63) 1st Canadian Army Group, R.A. (64) 2nd Canadian Army Group, R.A. (65) 6th South African Armd. Div.

Arm of Service Marks

(66/ H.Q. (67) R.A. (68) R.A.S.C. (69) Post-war R.A.S.C. (70) R. Canadian A.S.C. (71) R.E. (72) R.E.M.E. (73) R. Sigs. (74) Recce. Regt., R.A.C. (75) R.A.O.C. (76) Senior Armd. Bde. (77) Support Group H.Q. (78) Junior Armd. Bde. (79) Pioneer Corps.

Tank Flags and Marks

(80) Battalion Commander's Tank. (81) Company Commander's Tank. (82) 'Rally'. (83) 'Come on'. (84) 'Out of action'. (85) Section Commander's Tank. (86) H.Q. Squadron mark. (87) 'A' Squadron. (88) 'B' Squadron. (89) 'C' Squadron. (90) 'D' Squadron. (91-92) Bridge classification discs. (93) Early tank distinguishing mark. (94) Post-war R.A.C.

TABLE 5

ROYAL ARTILLERY VEHICLE TACTICAL SIGNS, 1939–1945

(A) FIELD REGIMENT (177th Field Regt, RA, of 33rd Guards' Independent Bde Group)

	Tac Mark	Vehicle
RHQ		
Commanding Officer	Z	Humber Snipe Utility
2-in C	Z2	Austin 8 cwt Utility
Adjutant	A1	Austin 8 cwt Utility
Chief Clerk	A2	Morris 15 cwt Office
RHQ Staff	A3	Bedford 15 cwt truck
Survey Officer	SUR 1	Austin 8 cwt Utility
Survey Party	SUR 2	Austin 8 cwt Utility
	SUR 3	
	SUR 4	
QM	Q1	Austin 8 cwt Utility
'Q' Stores, Officers' Mess	Q2	Bedford 15 cwt truck
Catering Staff	Q3	Bedford 3-tonner
	Q4	
	Q5	
	Q6	Bedford 200-gallon water truck
		Plus motor cycles numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, etc
Royal Sigs, attached to RHQ		
Signals Officer	S1	Austin 8 cwt Utility
Royal Sigs Equipment	S2	Bedford 15 cwt trucks
	S3	
	S4	

Note: Royal Sigs and REME attached often used RA coloured Tac signs, in addition to their normal Arm of Service mark; but sometimes, Royal Sigs had a Tac Sign in White/Blue with their distinctive Red letters.

(B) FIELD REGIMENT BATTERIES

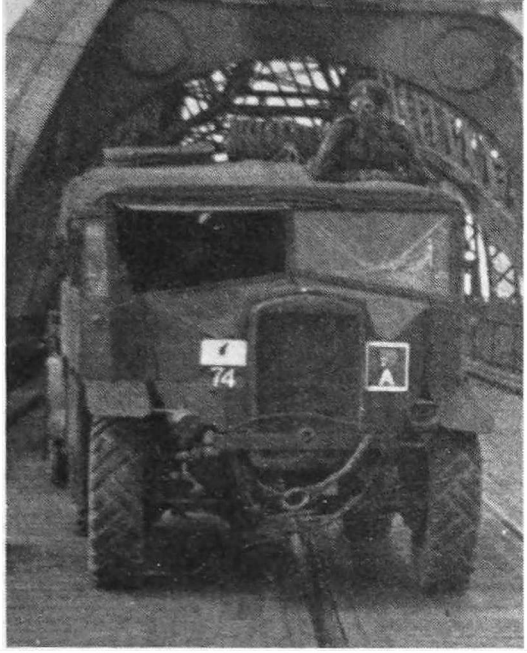
	'P' Battery	'Q' Battery	'R' Battery	Vehicle
Battery Commander	X	X	X	Carrier AOP (Note 1)
	X2	X2	X2	Austin 8 cwt Utility
Battery Captain	K1	K1	K1	Bedford 15 cwt FFW
Battery Captain's Staff	K2	K2	K2	Bedford 15 cwt FFW
Command Post Officer	H	H	H	Bedford 15 cwt FFW
Battery Survey	Y	Y	Y	Carrier AOP or Bedford 15 cwt FFW
RA Sigs	M1, 2, 3, 4, 5	M1, 2, 3, 4, 5	M1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Bedford 15 cwt (Note 2)
Amunition 'B' Echelon	AMN 1, 2, 3	AMN 1, 2, 3	AMN 1, 2, 3	Chev 3-tonners
Battery Stores and Cooks	Q1, 2, 3, 4	Q1, 2, 3, 4	Q1, 2, 3, 4	Bedford 3-tonners
	Q5	Q5	Q5	Bedford 200 gall water truck

Troops	'A'	'B'	'C'	'D'	'E'	'F'	
Troop Commander	RA	RB	RC	RD	RE	RF	Carrier AOP (Note 1)
Gun Position Officer	GA	GB	GC	GD	GE	GF	Bedford 15 cwt FFW
Troop Leader	TLA	TLB	TLC	TLD	TLE	TLF	Morris 8 cwt PU truck or Bedford 15 cwt FFW
4 X Morris 'Quad' tractors, with trailer and 25 pdr	A	E	A	E	A	E	
	B	F	B	F	B	F	
	C	G	C	G	C	G	
	D	H	D	H	D	H	
2 X spare Morris 'Quad' tractors with 2 X trailers each	AB	EF	AB	EF	AB	EF	
	CD	GH	CD	GH	CD	GH	

Plus approx. 12 motor cycles per battery, numbered 1, 2, 3, etc

Note: (1) Often replaced by OP tanks.
(2) Sometimes replaced by carrier AOPs.
(3) Motor cycles, sometimes replaced by Jeeps and numbered J1, etc.

An OP Cromwell attached to 5th RHA of 7th Armoured Division. The formation sign is the intermediate style and is combined with the arm of service mark. The Tac mark (RB) shows that the tank carries the Troop Commander of 'B' Troop in 'P' Battery (IWM).



ABOVE: Interesting views of two vehicles in a field regiment of 7th Armoured Division. On the left is a Morris 'Quad' gun tractor with tactical mark 'A' indicating the first vehicle in the troop. The other vehicle, tactical mark 'H', belongs to the command post officer. Note how the main signs are on detachable panels.

(C) LAA (Bofors) BATTERY (58th LAA Regt, RA, of 11th Armd Div—1944)

Battery HQ	Tac Mark	Vehicle
As in Field Regt	X	Jeep
	K	Jeep
	Q1	15 cwt
	Q2	15 cwt
	Q3	3-tonner
	WS	Jeep (REME)
	1, 2, 3 & 4	Motor cycles

FIRST BATTERY

Vehicle	'A' Troop (SP)	'B' Troop (Towed)		'C' Troop (Towed)		Vehicle
	AR1	BR1		CR1		Jeep
	AR2	BR2		etc		Jeep
	AS	BS				15 cwt (Sigs)
	AAMN	BAMN				3 ton (AMN)
	AQ1	BQ1				15 cwt
	AQ2	BQ2				3 ton
	AQ3	BQ3				3 ton
	AQ4	BQ4		—		200 gall
	TLA	TLB		TLC		Jeep
Morris SP 40 mm Bofors	A1	T1B	Bedford QL	1B	Bofors 40 mm Gun	
	A2	T2B		2B		
	A3	T3B		3B		
	A4	T4B	Bofors Tractor	4B		
	A5	T5B		5B	Carriages	
	A6	T6B		6B		

Notes (1) 'C' Troop gun tractors and guns as for 'B' Troop except T1C, 1C; T2C, 2C etc.
(2) Troop letters of Second and Third Batteries would be D. E. F and G, H, K.
(3) I was sometimes used instead of K.
(4) Sometimes other letters were used including X, Y and Z.

(D) TYPICAL MARKS FOR MATADOR TRACTORS IN A MEDIUM REGT

FIRST BATTERY

'A' Troop	'B' Troop	Alternative 'B' Troop Marks
AA	BE	BA
AB	BF	BB
AC	BG	BC
AD	BH	BD

SECOND BATTERY

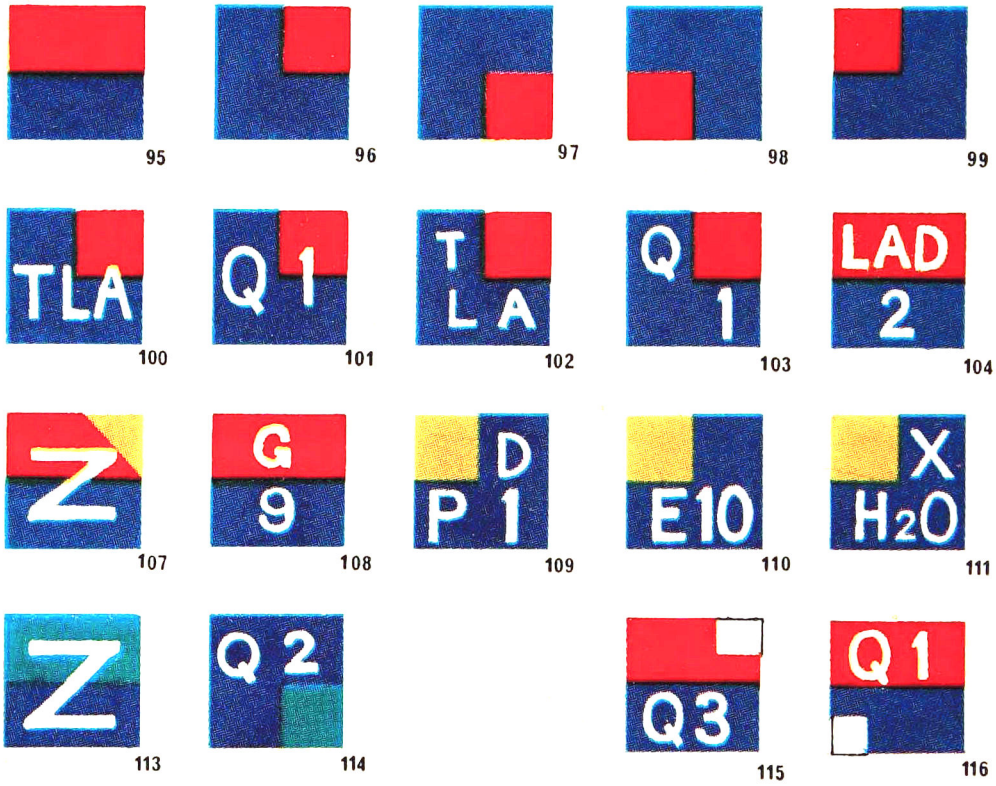
'C' Troop	'D' Troop	Alternative 'D' Troop Marks
CA	DE	DA
CB	DF	DB
CC	DG	DC
CD	DH	DD

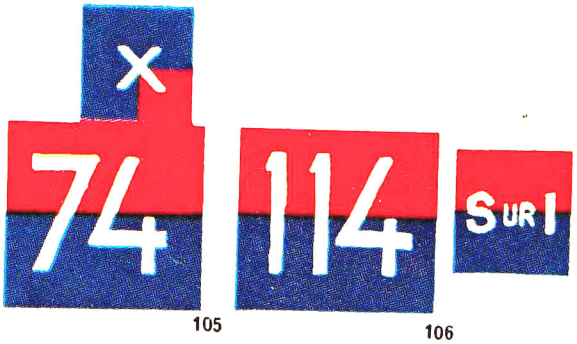
(E) TYPICAL MARKS OF AN SP FIELD REGIMENT

(33rd Field Regt RA of 3rd Inf Div—1944—equipped with Priests)

BATTERY	101		109		113/114	
	'A' Troop	'B' Troop	'C' Troop	'D' Troop	'E' Troop	'F' Troop
	AA	BA	CA	DA	EA	FA
	AB	BB	CB	DB	EB	FB
	AC	BC	CC	DC	EC	FC
	AD	BD	CD	DD	ED	FD

Note: Letters painted in White on RA Blue Tac square with appropriate Red 'battery' quarter.





Royal Artillery Tactical Marks

(95) R.H.Q. or Independent Battery. (96) 1st Battery. (97) 2nd Battery. (98) 3rd Battery. (99) 4th Battery. (100-101) Typical field regiment marks. (102-103) Typical A.A. regiment marks. (104) Light Aid Detachment (pre-R.E.M.E.). (105) Typical marks for Battery Commander of 2nd battery of a field regiment. (106) Alternative arrangement—Survey Officer of a field regiment. (107-111) Typical marks of a survey regiment. (112) Early L.A.D. mark above arm of service mark. (113-114) Special mark used by 102 A/T Regt., R.A. (115) Immediate post-war arrangement, 1st Battery. (116) Immediate post-war arrangement, 3rd Battery.

(117) Rare case of two formation signs, 22nd Armd. Bde. and 7th Armd. Div. (118) Cromwell of 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars. (119) Cromwell of 2nd Northamptonshire Yeomanry. (120) 3-ton 4 x 4 lorry, 42nd Assault Regt. R.E. (121) Marking used by 4/7th Royal Dragoon Guards. (122) Marking used by 141st Regt., R.A.C.

Tank Brigades and Armoured Brigades—'Diabolo Marks'

(123) 21st Army Tank Bde. (alternative mark). (124) 23rd Army Tank Bde. (125) 24th Army Tank Bde. (126) 25th Army Tank Bde. (127) 31st Independent Armd. Bde. (128) 33rd Armd. Bde. (129) 35th Armd. Bde. (130) 36th Tank Bde.

SURVEY REGIMENTS

THESE conformed in principle to the RA scheme, but yellow was used instead of red in the battery quarter, RHQ using the RA colours with a yellow chamfer across the top right-hand quarter.

NON-STANDARD MARKS

IT need hardly be said that even in this well-regulated sphere, variations existed (page 28, Figs 113 and 114). Here, although the regiment otherwise conformed, it used its own regimental light and dark blue, instead of the more usual RA colours.

THE ARMY GROUP, ROYAL ARTILLERY
21 ARMY GROUP, 1943-44

THE Army Group, RA (AGRA), as the name implies, was a grouping together of medium and heavy artillery regiments under Army control (Army in this context refers, of course, to the formation title and not the generic term). The AGRA was a brigadier's command, approximating in size to a brigade group.

In 21 Army Group the nominal establishment was one regiment of field artillery (25 pdrs), four regiments of medium artillery (5·5" guns) and one regiment of heavy artillery (equal numbers of 7·2" hows and US 155 mm guns). However, from its inception the AGRA was intended to be flexible as regards units and this establishment can therefore be used only as a guide.

In 21 Army Group, AGRAs were allotted on the scale of one per Corps, plus one spare under GHQ command. They were not, however, Corps troops, although each was, in fact, affiliated to a specific Corps for general operations. The main principle was that being under Army command (2nd or 1st Canadian Armies in this case) the full force of several AGRAs could, if necessary, be applied to one sector of the front with devastating effect. The forerunner of the AGRA was Corps Medium Artillery—an organisation that lacked the ability to concentrate a mass of guns, since control was vested in a number of subordinate commanders, which in practice resulted in the dissipation of available firepower over the whole front. Corps Medium Artillery, which in other respects was a similar grouping to the AGRA, was abolished in 1942. Control of the Corps anti-tank and survey regiments continued to be exercised at Corps level throughout the war, however, in view of the need to keep these units near the front line at all times. The field regiment in the AGRA was a useful reserve for the relief of divisional artillery regiments, etc. Two actual instances of their use were: (i) taking the place of 3 Division's field regiments while they were converted from SP 105 mm guns to towed 25 pdrs in August 1944; and (ii) acting as divisional artillery to the 6 Airborne Division when the latter was operating in a ground role.

There is much evidence of the success of the AGRA system and doubtless this stems from the flexibility with which large numbers of guns could be switched from sector to sector, often confusing the Germans as to the strength of British forces and their intentions. This success was not always appreciated by the French inhabitants who saw whole villages pulverised by British guns as an inevitable prelude to each attack.

An interesting unit that joined 9 AGRA in the latter half of 1944 was 3rd Super Heavy Regiment. This regiment had been re-equipped in 1944 with US 8" guns and 240 mm hows. The action weight of the 8" gun and 240 mm (9·45") how was 31 tons and 29 tons respectively, and the gun and carriage were transported in two loads, each drawn by an M6 high-speed tracked

An example of AGRA markings. AEC Matador Tractor H4489335 'Gazala' of a Medium Artillery Regiment tows its 5·5" gun through a Normandy village. The RA tactical mark is combined with the arm of service mark, whose number is in the Army Group allocation, and has the typical white band below. Under the 2nd Army badge there is a chalked convoy number, and the tractor has the double style bridge mark (IWM-B6271).

tractor. The 8" gun had a range of 20 miles and the 240 mm how could project a 3-cwt shell over 14 miles. 2nd Super Heavy Regiment, which was equipped with 9·2" railway mounted guns, was mobilised for service with 21 Army Group, but never left England. Towards the end of 1944 61 (N. Midland) Field Regiment was re-equipped with the 8" gun and 240 mm howitzers and also served with 21 Army Group.

Attached units

Royal Signals: Each AGRA HQ and each regiment had its own attached Royal Signals section. Serial numbers were the same as those used by the host unit, painted in red on white over blue. Tactical markings were usually a small square, white over blue with red digits. In almost every case the digits comprised a number prefixed with the letter 'S', eg S1, S2, S3, S4, etc. In a few cases RA colours of red over blue were used for the tactical signs instead of white over blue.

RASC: The Artillery company attached to each AGRA comprised a number of separate Artillery Platoons to act as second line and these were attached to each RA regiment on the scale of one per regiment. The Artillery Platoon comprised about 40 × 3-ton lorries and the strength was about 100 men under the command of a Captain. The serial number of the parent RA unit was used, painted in white on RASC (or RCASC) colours. Tactical signs were not always used, but if they were, they would often follow the usual RASC practice of numbering each vehicle. This was generally painted in white, eg, A1, A2, A3, etc. Another system sometimes used was to paint a simple coloured

ABOVE AND RIGHT: 1st Army Scammell tractors towing 7·2" howitzers negotiating a sharp bend in Italy. The RA tactical mark above the names 'Hard-hitter' and 'Connaught' is repeated above the Army Group arm of service mark on the offside wings. Above the formation badge the words 'Anti-Freeze. Do not drain' are stencilled in white. The personnel are RA troops, and all wear the 1st Army badge as a shoulder flash (IWM-NA10154/10156).

stripe, front and rear, to denote the section to which the vehicle belonged.

REME: LADs were attached to all the regiments and used the serial number of the host unit painted in white on REME colours. Tactical markings were not always used; when they were they were usually based on a numerical system, prefixed 'LAD', ie, LAD1, LAD2, LAD3, etc, painted in white on a small square either of REME or of RA colours.

Vehicle markings

The AGRAs of 21 Army Group used one of three formation signs, ie, 2nd Army Group, 1st Canadian Army or 21 Army Group. Examples of actual markings appear on page 37.

Unit serial numbers were allocated to 2nd Army Units from the GHQ/Army Troops range in the following groups:

First AGRA of the Army	—	173-180
Second AGRA of the Army	—	181-187
Third AGRA of the Army	—	188-194

No fourth AGRA was envisaged at the time of allocation (since it was rare for more than three Corps to comprise an Army) and when 5 AGRA returned from Italy to join 2nd Army it was allocated a series that then happened to be available (1191-1199).

1st Canadian Army used the same numbering system as 2nd Army above, the 173-180 series being used by 1st Canadian AGRA until its departure to Sicily/Italy in 1943 and the 181-187 series was used by 2nd Canadian AGRA. The formation sign differentiated units using the same serial number in just the same way as in Divisions, etc.

9 AGRA of 21 Army Group used serial 175 for one of its Medium Regiments and it is possible therefore that it used the same numbering series as 2nd Army and 1st Canadian Army, viz, 173-180—being appropriate for the first (in this case the only) AGRA of that particular formation. However, it is doubtful whether it was actually as simple as that, since 9 AGRA was the holding formation for all spare RA regiments in 21 Army Group and it is probable that a variety of serial numbers was used from time to time.

Tactical markings

No special comments are called for under this heading—usual RA tactical markings, as shown on the coloured plates, were used by AGRA units. Comments in respect of tactical markings on vehicles of attached units have been made under the respective headings.

AGRA ORDERS OF BATTLE, 21 ARMY GROUP

In addition to the units shown in the following orders of battle, there were two SP Field Regiments under 2nd Army command, each equipped with 25 pdr SP Sextons. These were:

Regiment	Unit Serial
86 (E. Anglian) (Hertfordshire Yeomanry) Field Regt, RA	Not known
147 (Essex Yeomanry) Field Regt, RA	1177

In view of the flexible organisation of the AGRA the grouping of units shown herein varied in some details as the campaign progressed. This was particularly so in the case of 9 AGRA under direct 21 Army Group command.

Notes: (1) Unit Serial Numbers are given, where known.
(2) 147 Field Regt RA, was allocated to 8 Arm Bde, when it used that Brigade's Formation Sign.

3RD ARMY GROUP, RA

Formed early 1943.
Affiliated to 12 Corps.
Formation sign used: 2nd Army.

Order of battle		Unit Serial
3	AGRA	173
HQ 3	AGRA Signal Section, RCS	173
6	Field Regt, RA	174
13	Medium Regt, RA	175
59	(4th W. Lancashire) Medium Regt, RA	176
67	(Suffolk) Medium Regt, RA	177
72	Medium Regt, RA	178
59	(Newfoundland) Heavy Regt, RA	179
	Artillery Coy, RASC	

4TH ARMY GROUP, RA

Formed March 1943.
Affiliated to 1st Corps.
Formation sign used: 2nd Army.

Order of battle		Unit Serial
HQ 4	AGRA	181
HQ 4	AGRA Signal Section, RCS	181
150	(S. Notts Hussars Yeo) Field Regt, RA	182
53	(London) Medium Regt, RA	183
65	(Highland) Medium Regt, RA	184
68	(4th W. Lancashire) Medium Regt, RA	185
79	(Scottish Horse) Medium Regt, RA	186
51	Heavy Regt, RA	187
319	Artillery Coy, RASC	

5TH ARMY GROUP, RA

The AGRA returned to the UK from Italy end-1943, together with certain other elements of 30 Corps and 8th Army.

Affiliated to 30 Corps.
Formation sign used: 2nd Army

Order of battle			Unit Serial
HQ 5	AGRA Troops		1190
HQ 5	AGRA		1191
HQ 5	AGRA Signal Section, RCS		1191
	4th Regt, RHA	(1)	
7	Medium Regt, RA	(2)	1192
64	(London) Medium Regt, RA	(2)	1193
84	(Sussex) Medium Regt, RA		1194
121	(W. Riding) Medium Regt, RA		1195
52	(Bedfordshire Yeomanry) Heavy Regt, RA		
	Artillery Coy, RASC		

Notes: (1) Operated mainly with 4 Armd Bde from mid-June 1944 onwards and re-equipped with SP guns.
(2) One battery of each regiment equipped with 4·5″ guns.

8TH ARMY GROUP, RA

Formed May 1943 by the redesignation of HQ RA 54 (East Anglia) Infantry Division.
Affiliated to 8 Corps.
Formation sign used: 2nd Army

Order of battle			Unit Serial
HQ 8	AGRA		188
HQ 8	AGRA Signal Section, RCS		188
25	Field Regt, RA		189
61	(Caernarvon & Denbighshire) Medium Regt, RA		190
63	(Midland) Medium Regt, RA		190
77	(Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry) Medium Regt, RA		192
146	(Pembroke & Cardiganshire) Medium Regt. RA	(1)	193
15	Medium Regt, RA	(1)	193
53	Heavy Regt, RA		194
116	Artillery Coy, RASC		

Note: (1) 146 Medium Regt transferred to 9 AGRA before D-day and believed replaced by 15 Medium Regt.

9TH ARMY GROUP, RA

Formed in May 1943 by the conversion of HQ RA 79 Armoured Division.
9 AGRA was a GHQ Troops formation
and was not affiliated to a Corps.
Formation sign used: 21 Army Group.

Order of battle		Unit Serial
HQ 9 AGRA		See text, page 33
HQ 9 Signal Section, RCS		
9	(RWK) Medium Regt, RA	(1)
10	(RF) Medium Regt, RA	(2)
11	(Essex) Medium Regt, RA	(3)
16	Medium Regt, RA	(4)
107	(S. Notts Hussars Yeo) Medium Regt, RA	(4)
146	(Pembroke & Cardiganshire) Medium Regt, RA	(5)
	1st Heavy Regiment, RA	(5)
	3rd Super Heavy Regiment,, RA	
738	Artillery Coy, RASC	

Notes: (1) Regiment formed by the conversion of 8th Bn RWK end-1942.
(2) Regiment formed by the conversion of 16th Bn RF in late 1942.
(3) Regiment formed by the conversion of 9th Bn Essex Regt in December 1942.
(4) When 7 Med Regt returned to UK from Italy end-1943, 107 Bty left and joined 16 Med Regt which was re-organised and renumbered 107 Med Regt.
(5) 1st Heavy Regt trained with 9 AGRA, but before D-day was transferred to 2 Canadian AGRA and had its place taken by 146 Med Regt.

2ND CANADIAN ARMY GROUP, RA

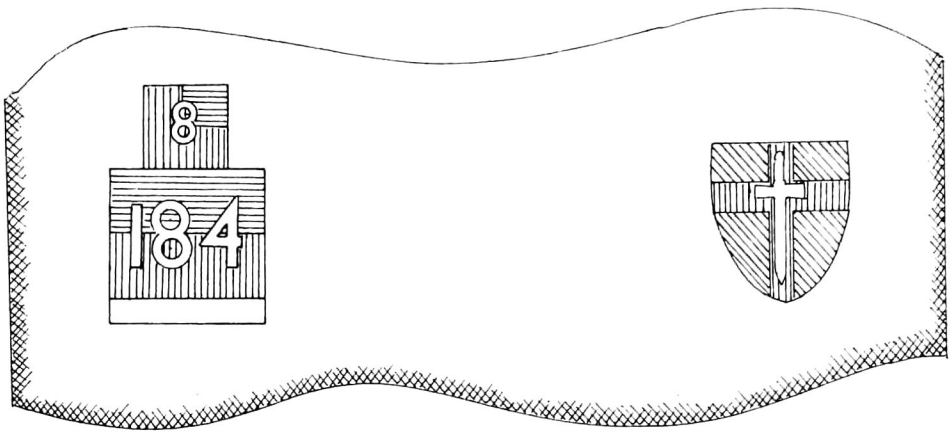
Affiliated to 2nd Canadian Corps.
Formation sign used: 1st Canadian Army.

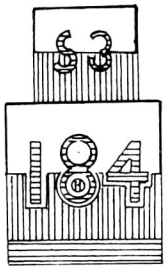
Order of battle		Unit Serial
HQ 2 Canadian AGRA		181
HQ 2 Canadian AGRA Signal Section, RCCS		181
19	Field Regt, RCA	185
3	Medium Regt, RCA	182
4	Medium Regt, RCA	183
7	Medium Regt, RCA	184
2	HAA Regt, RCA	260
British increment:		
191	(Hertfordshire & Essex Yeomanry) Field Regt, RA	186
	1st Heavy Regt, RA	187

THE examples on the next page show the various units that used the same serial number in a typical AGRA Regiment. They comprise the RA Regiment itself (in this case the 65 (Highland) Medium Regiment); the attached Royal Signals section; the RASC Artillery Platoon—for carrying second line ammunition and stores; and finally, the LAD REME.

The RA vehicle shown was an AEC Matador gun tractor, registration number H.4491478, and displayed the tactical marking '8'. It belonged to 222 (Fraserburgh) Battery.

Unlike most similar units, which used an alphabetical sequence for their guns and tractors, this unit numbered its guns 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.





Although not repeated here, each vehicle displayed, of course, the 2nd Army sign, as shown above.

Colour Key

Blue

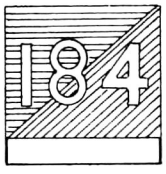
Red

White

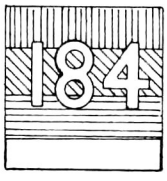
Black

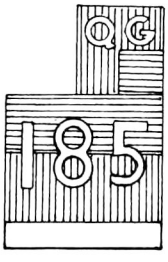
Green

Yellow



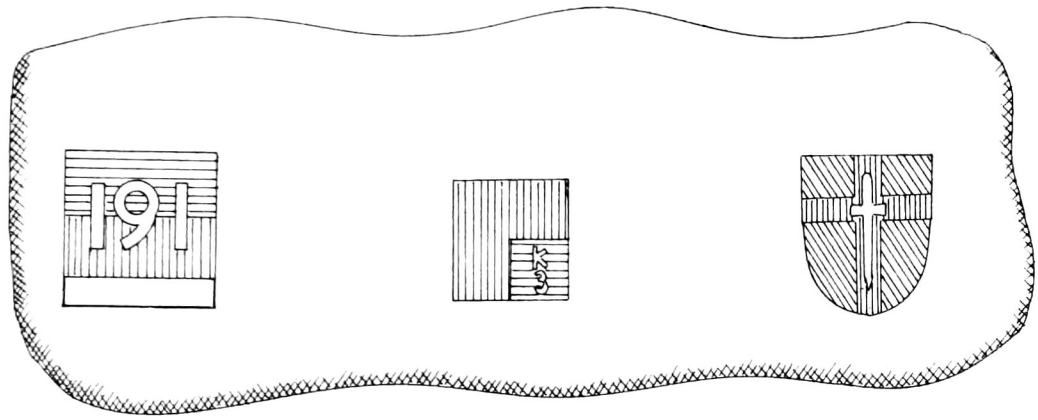
See page 35 for details of these signs.





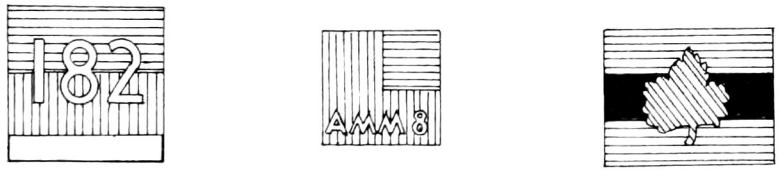
Left: Marking based on photographs of an AEC Matador Medium Artillery Gun Tractor, registration number H.4489335. The tac sign shows that this was 'G' gun tractor of 'Q' troop, 234 Battery, 68 (4th W. Lancs) Medium Regiment, RA. The name 'Gazala' painted on the front of this vehicle reiterates the 'G' sub-section and also brings to mind that this regiment had served in the Western Desert—until captured by the Germans at Tobruk in June 1942. The regiment was reformed in Cheshire during 1943, mainly from coast artillery personnel.

Some other Matadors of this battery were 'QF'—H.4490464 and 'QI'—H.4491256. It is not known why 'Q' was used for the troop letter in preference to the conventional 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D'.



Above: This marking was displayed by a Jeep belonging to an 8 AGRA Medium Regiment, and is included because it shows the tac sign digits painted only on the red portion—an uncommon practice.

Above: Marking used by a Medium Regiment of 9 AGRA in mid-1944. The 'A2' tac sign was displayed by a Morris 15 cwt office truck.



Above: Marking used by 3rd Medium Regiment, RCA. In this particular case, a Chevrolet 3 tonner displaying the tac sign 'AMM 8' (ammunition first line, lorry No 8).

Above: This is an example of a Corps Medium Artillery marking used in 1941–42. Bedford 15 cwt, registration number Z.4178087 of 2nd Corps. The 2nd Corps formation sign is allusive to its original commander, Lieut.-General Sir Alan Brooke.

Above: Example of Corps Medium Artillery marking used by the Canadian Corps in 1941. When a second Canadian Corps was formed in 1942 the Canadian Corps became 1st Canadian Corps and the formation sign was changed from that shown here.

VEHICLE NAMES

IN addition to the foregoing marks—and others yet to be discussed—vehicles of all kinds were given nicknames. Many adopted names beginning with A for A squadron, B for B squadron, and so on. Some regiments chose names alluding to their title—the Sherwood Rangers taking characters from Robin Hood—while others used place names associated with their County. The three Bridge-layers of the 6th Guards Tank Brigade were named *Forth Bridge, London Bridge* and *Brooklyn Bridge*. All the vehicles attached to the Coldstream Guards Battalion HQ were named after birds—and when they captured a German tank and used it as an AOP, they whimsically called it *Cuckoo*.

Understandably, the Scots Guards chose names linked to Scotland—names like *Reel-o'-Tulloch* and *Craig-n'-Darroch* which one presumes they could pronounce if nobody else could.

BRIDGING CLASSIFICATION MARKS

AS an indication of their combat weight, all vehicles carried a numbered circle on some prominent frontal position. On tanks, the device was usually painted directly on to the hull, but in MT vehicles, it was more often a metal disc mounted vertically on the off- or near-side wing.

Two painting styles were used (Figs 91 and 92) without apparently any governing rules, and even then there were slight variations which can be seen in the photographs.

In the case of heavy towing tractors, like tank transporters, the numbers were shown as a fraction, the 'numerator' showing the combined weight, and the 'denominators' that of the tractor alone.

OTHER APPLICATIONS OF MARKINGS

FORMATION, Arm of Service and Bridge Classification discs were also combined on notice boards set by the roadside as route markers. Bridges—particularly of the pontoon type—were so marked, restricting their use to vehicles whose bridge classification was within that of the bridge itself.

Often, special additional instructions regarding the spacing of vehicles were posted at the bridge approaches. In the case of large bridges, the RE unit responsible for its construction included their Formation and Arm of Service mark on its Title Board.

ABOVE: An Austin ambulance of 30 Corps. The arm of service badge has the white strip indicating Corps Troops. The serial number identifies it as belonging to the Motor Ambulance Convoy of the Corps RASC. The vehicle nickname 'Pat' and an unofficial wheel and serpent badge (partly under water) can also be seen. LEFT: An Archer 17-pdr SP A/T gun with GZ RA Tac mark and the standard arm of service number of the Infantry Division A/T Regiment. Several route marks appear on the tree to the right of the picture (IWM-BU2864).

RIGHT: A carrier of the 1st Dorsets when they formed part of the 43rd (Wessex) Division. The vehicle is painted in green/brown camouflage and wears the Regimental Badge on the side. It is being used here by the C-in-C Home Forces, General Sir Bernard Paget, on an inspection tour (IWM-H25559). OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: Prime Minister Winston Churchill inspects a Cromwell tank of Guards Armoured Division in 1944. Vehicle has the red-white-red RAC recognition sign. Note the B Squadron marking and name (IWM-BH24131).

Part 5: Other Vehicle Marks

BEFORE the Second World War, all vehicles carried several other marks which included:

(a) A civilian-style registration plate at front and rear.
(b) A WD number and prefix classification letter
(c) An abbreviation of the title of the unit to which the vehicle belonged.
(d) A letter 'B' in the case of non-combatant wheeled vehicles.
(e) A letter 'A' for all combat vehicles, including Scout and Armoured cars.
(f) A Maximum Speed disc on the rear of 'B' vehicles only.

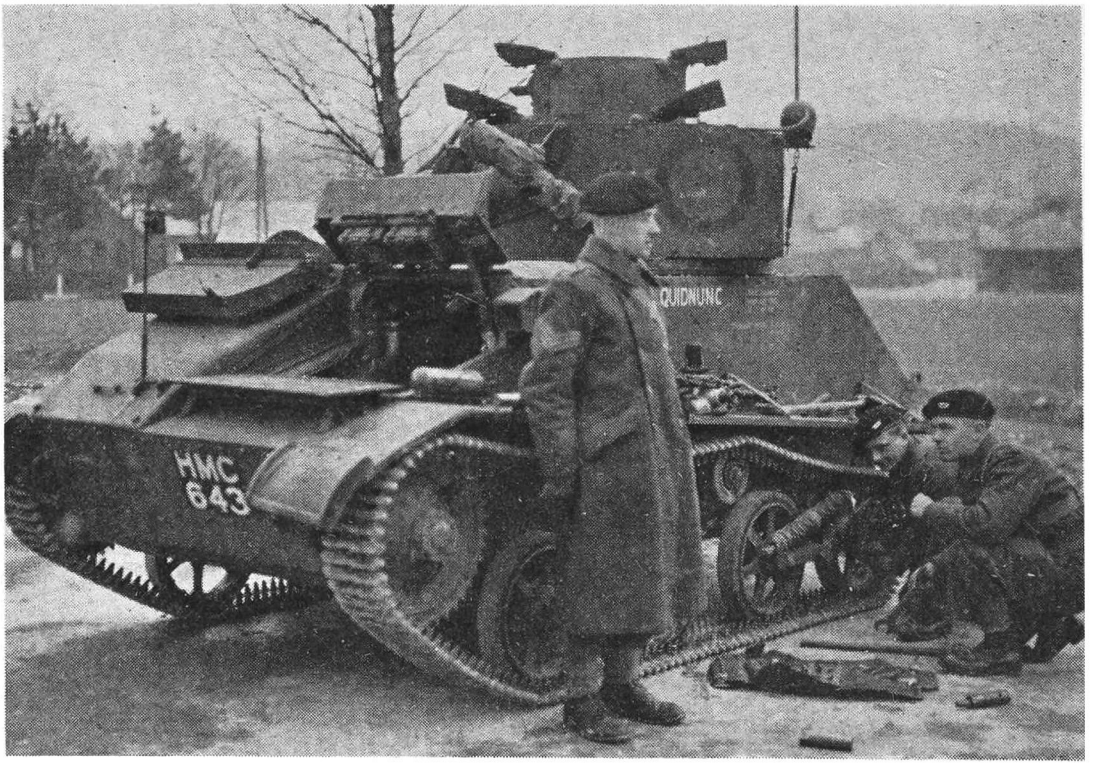
All these were lettered or numbered in white, except for the 'A' and 'B' marks, which were in red.

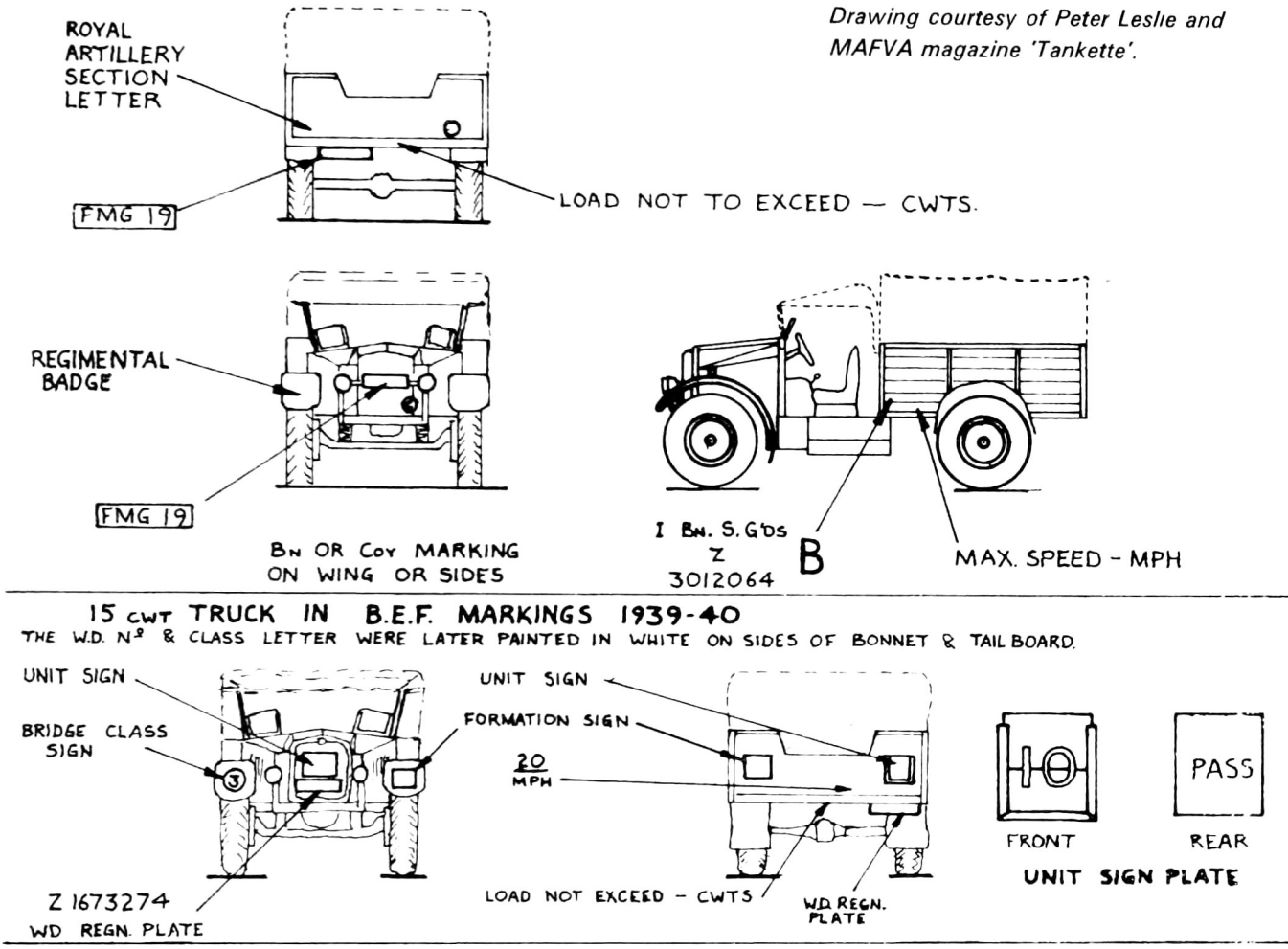
The WD classification letters for 'B' vehicles were:

A	Ambulances	M	Motor cars
C	Motor cycles	V	Vans
H	Wheeled tractors	X	Trailers
L	Lorries	Z	Trucks

The numbers followed a sequence which had started with 1 in 1920, and

BELOW: Typical pre-war markings included a civilian style number plate, here seen on a Light Tank Mk VI of 1st East Riding Yeomanry in February 1940. The squadron symbol is seen on the turret. Small stencilling just visible gives empty and loaded weights (on side), 'Sling Here' (on front), and 'Light' on turret side, the latter referring to the spotlight wiring.





Drawing courtesy of Peter Leslie and MAFVA magazine 'Tankette'.

ABOVE: Detailed sketches give standard markings applied to vehicles just before the war and in the early months with the BEF in France.

were allocated by the RASC Stores Depot.

During the 1930s, a scheme was instituted where the first two numbers indicated the year of entry into service but this does not seem to have survived for long. No doubt it was given up in the enormous wartime expansion.

Armoured vehicles had a separate numbering system controlled by the Chief Inspector of Armaments, which started in 1919 with 1. At first all AFVs, whether tracked or otherwise, were given the prefix letter 'T' but in the mid-1920s armoured cars were changed to 'F' and tracked towing vehicles to 'D'—the latter because of the 'Dragon' tractors then in vogue.

Throughout World War 2, 'T' remained the general prefix for all tanks and carriers, although some oddities existed. Early Cromwell types, like the Centaur and Cavalier, had 'L' for Liberty engine or 'M' for Meteor, while some re-worked Churchills had 'W'.

All the other letters remained in use for the various vehicles, a new letter—'S'—being used for SP guns on tank chassis like the Sexton, but the civilian-style registration plates were no longer carried.

Prior to 1939, it was not unusual to see the vehicle's Regimental badge displayed in full colour on the radiator front or cab side, but when war broke out, these emblems were hastily painted out. Nevertheless, they occasionally reappeared during the war on vehicles specially made spick-and-span for visiting VIPs, as shown in the picture on page 39.

ABOVE: Some typical markings from the early period of the war. These Bren-gun carriers have the civil type registration numbers, large WD numbers, a local tactical sign (SF2), large bridge class plates, and a geometric symbol indicating a role as 'enemy' or 'attackers' in military exercises (IWM-H2919).

RECOGNITION SIGNS

The RAC Flash

IN 1917, British tanks were given a prominent white/red/white mark to make them easily distinguishable from captured units used by the enemy, and the colours were, in fact, those of the Cavalry Corps.

The mark reappeared in the early phases of the North African campaign, again as a recognition sign for the benefit of friendly forces. At this time, markings were far from rationalised, as evidenced by the following extract from the 7th Armoured Brigade's orders of 1941 :

> 'All armoured vehicles which have wireless masts will wear pennants in the Position of the Day. Tanks wear a red-and-white sign, but some newly arrived may not have had them painted on. Armoured cars have no colour sign but they show they are friendly by holding a flag out on their right.'

Some of the pennants referred to above are illustrated in colour. In addition, a large black flag was flown by the regimental 'navigator' so that his colleagues could adjust their positions accordingly, but this provided such a good aiming mark for enemy gunners that it was quickly abandoned.

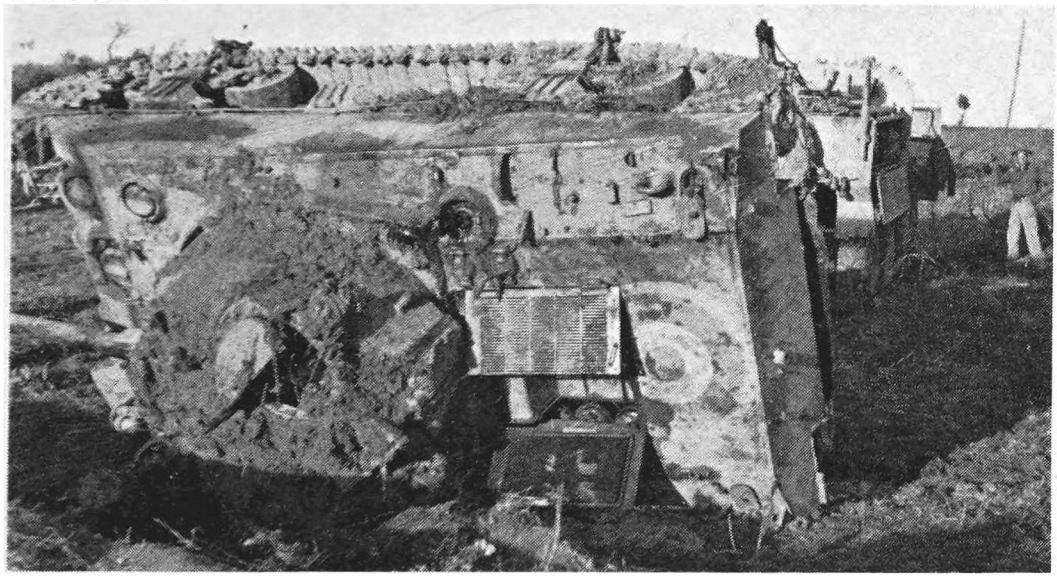
A similar mark, but divided red/white/red, was also used on tanks, but by no means invariably. For the most part, it seems to have been used on tanks like the Churchill, Matilda, and Valentine, as well as on special-purpose AFVs: in other words on those tanks which worked in close co-operation with Infantry forces.

Air Recognition Signs

IN the latter part of the North African campaign and in Italy, vehicles wore an RAF-style red, white and blue roundel on the roof or bonnet; or in the case of tanks, on the engine casing.

In North West Europe for the Overlord landings of June 1944 a white five-pointed star was worn on all Allied vehicles. On trucks and the like, it was painted on the cab doors and on the bonnet or roof, the upward-facing mark being contained within a white circle. Tanks were similarly marked. The stars

ABOVE: Albion bridging trucks in a 1943 Cairo parade. They show an extra large air recognition sign (red/white/blue/yellow) on the cab roof. The D44, D45, are presumably troop numbers used within this particular bridging company. BELOW: A similar air recognition sign on a knocked-out Sherman tank. Sometimes tanks carried a smaller roundel on the turret top (IWM-NA9430).



BELOW: Tanks were frequently so festooned with equipment and extra protection that all markings were completely obscured. The Chevrolet truck, due to its very short bonnet, carries the upward-facing Allied air recognition star on the cab top instead. Note that its formation sign is also carried on the bonnet top, where it can hardly be seen (IWM).

remained in use officially until the end of the war, though in practice they were often painted out, particularly on vehicle sides, as they offered too good a sighting mark for German gunners.

Miscellaneous Marks

THESE included:

(a) A patch of light khaki (mustard) Gas Detector paint on the front hull of AFVs and on the headlamp or ahead of the windscreen of other vehicles.

(b) 'CAUTION—LEFT-HAND DRIVE—NO SIGNALS' in white on the rear of appropriate equipment.

(c) A Mobilisation Number, Convoy Number and Landing Craft Number temporarily worn for movement purposes.

BASIC VEHICLE COLOUR SCHEMES

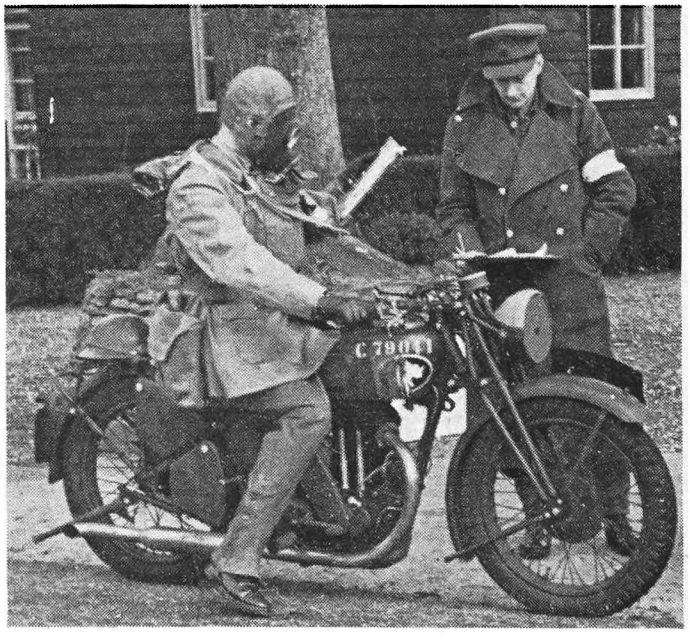
THE standard pre-war colour was a semi-gloss dark green, but for exercises, tanks sometimes had sand and earth-coloured patches applied.

The BEF in 1939-40 used matt dark green and dark earth, much of the same shades as contemporary military aircraft, and this continued to be used in the U.K. after the Dunkirk Evacuation; but from about 1942, it was replaced by the familiar 'olive drab'. Again, it was often patched with dark earth or black.

Naturally enough, the basic North African shade was 'sand' (light stone) with or without black and/or blue-grey panels superimposed by way of camouflage.

Camouflage itself was frequently applied in haste to suit existing conditions, and in the Ardennes snow, everything was treated to liberal doses of white paint. In Malta, sand colour prevailed, but with an overall 'crazy-paving' effect in brown, the better to blend with the background of buildings.

RIGHT AND BELOW: Army Council Instructions of October 1943 restricted motor-cycle markings to arm of service/unit signs, only, on each side of the fuel tank. Before this, however, a formation sign was usually carried on one side as shown in the picture of the 1st Armoured Division Ariel of 1940. The style for the unit sign is shown on the Norton on the right.



ABOVE: The distinctive Malta camouflage on a Humber utility used by HM The King on the Royal Visit to Malta in June 1943. Vehicle carries a bridge class disc and a unit sign, but the Malta Garrison formation sign is omitted as it frequently was on Malta-based vehicles (IWM-GM3398).

A REME tractor towing a repaired Valentine tank in the Cairo parade of 1943. Both vehicles are painted in the North African sand/black colour scheme, and the tractor wears the REME arm of service mark on the cab side—a red, yellow, blue strip divided vertically. This was unusual. The 'Re-issue' board was an addition for the benefit of parade spectators (IWM-BM28515).

RIGHT: Trucks and other vehicles permanently based in the Middle East usually had duplicate Roman/Arabic registration numbers. This vehicle has the GHQ Middle East formation sign and a speed limit notice as well as the Arabic lettering. The motor-cyclist is an American military policeman (IWM-BM31080).

Part 6: Guide to Vehicle Markings

IN the following tables a detailed guide is given to various military formations at specified periods with listings of types of units in their respective 'orders of battle' together with their unit serial numbers and 'arm of service' colours carried on the vehicles. The tables may thus be used to establish, in most cases, the unit to which any given vehicle belongs provided the serial number and formation sign can be seen.

VEHICLE MARKING—ARMOURED DIVISION—1942

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
HQ Armd Div	40	Black
Div Employment Plat		
Div Intel Corps Sec		
Div Field Security		
1. Armd Bde HQ	50	Red
Armd Regt	51	
Armd Regt	52	
Armd Regt	53	
Motor Batt	78	
2. Armd Bde HQ	60	Green
Armd Regt	61	
Armd Regt	62	
Armd Regt	63	
Motor Batt	79	
HQ Support Group	75	Brown
Inf Batt	74	
RA		
RHA Regt	76	Red/Blue
A/T Regt	77	
LAA Regt	78	
RAC		
Armd Car Regt	47	Black
RE		
Field Sq	46	Cobalt Blue
Field Sq	41	
Field Park Sq	42	
Royal Sigs		
Armd Div Sigs	48	White/Blue
RASC		
HQ, RASC	80	Red/Green
1. Armd Bde Coy	81	
2. Armd Bde Coy	82	
Support Group Coy	83	
Armd Div Troops	84	
RAMC		
Light Field Ambulance	89	Black
Light Field Ambulance	90	
Light Field Ambulance	91	

Notes: (1) See Armd Div—1944 for Tac Markings.

(2) Before the introduction of distinguishing numbers and letters within the Tac sign, AFVs flew flags and/or pendants on their wireless aerials, examples of which are shown on page 25.
In the case of the Company or Squadron Commander, the swallow-tailed pendant was Red for 'A'; Yellow for 'B' and Blue for 'C'.
Section Commander's tanks flew a black triangular pendant with two diagonal coloured bars as follows:

Section	Bar Colour
1, 6, 11	Red
2, 7, 12	Yellow
3, 8, 13	Blue
4, 9, 14	Green
5, 10, 15	White

(3) Before radio became a standard fitting in all AFVs, communication was by semaphore and flag. See pages 63 and 64.

(4) Sections were sometimes lettered A to D instead of 1 to 5, etc.

VEHICLE MARKING—ARMOURED DIVISIONS—1944

	Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
HQ	Armd Div	40	Black
	Armd Div Employment Plat		
HQ	Armd Div RA	40	Red/Blue
	Armd Div RASC	80	Red/Green
	Armd Div RAOC	40	Blue/Red/Blue
	Armd Div REME		Blue/Yellow/Red
	Armd Div Field Security Sec		Black
HQ	Armd Bde	50	
	Armd Regt	51	
	Armd Regt	52	Red
	Armd Regt	53	
	Motor Batt	54	
HQ	Inf Bde	60	
	Inf Bde HQ Ground Def Plat		
	Inf Batt	61	Green
	Inf Batt	62	
	Inf Batt	63	
RAC			
	Armd Recce Regt...	45	Green/Blue
RA			
	Field Regt	74	
	Field Regt	76	
	A/T Regt	77	Red/Blue
	LAA Regt	73	
	Counter Mortar Battery...	78	
RE			
	Field Park Sq	42	
	Field Sq	41	Cobalt Blue
	Field Sq	46	
	Div Bridging Troop	52	
Royal Sigs			
	Armd Div Sigs	See Notes	White/Blue

	Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
Inf			
	Independ M/G Coy	64	Black
RASC			
	Armd Bde Coy	81	
	Inf Bde Coy...	83	Red/Green
	Armd Div Troops Coy	84	
	Armd Div Transport Coy	82	
RAMC			
	Light Field Ambulance	89	
	Field Ambulance	90	Black
	Field Dressing Station	93	
	Field Hygiene Sec	92	
RAOC			
	Armd Div Ord Field Park	97	Blue/Red/Blue
REME			
	Armd Bde Workshop	99	Blue/Yellow/Red
	Inf Bde Workshop	100	
CMP			
	Amd Div Provost Coy	43	Black
MISC			
	Div Battle School and Training Centre	41	Black
	Armd Div Postal Unit	44	Black
	Armd Car Regt (Corps Troops)	44	Green/Blue

Notes: (1) The Tac Marks were officially:
Senior Armd Regt or Batt—Red
Second Armd Regt or Batt—Yellow
Third Armd Regt or Batt—Blue
Fourth Armd Regt or Batt—Red and Yellow
Motor Batt—Green
Unbrigaded units—White
Bde and Div HQ vehicles carried no Tac markings.

(2) See also text regarding variations. When Red/Yellow was used, the colour boundary was vertical through the geometric symbol, Red left, Yellow right. When a 'D' Coy existed it carried a vertical bar, Red above Yellow.

(3) 'Non-standard' numbers instead of Tac marks were sometimes used, eg:
144 Regt RAC (E. Lancs) NWE 1944

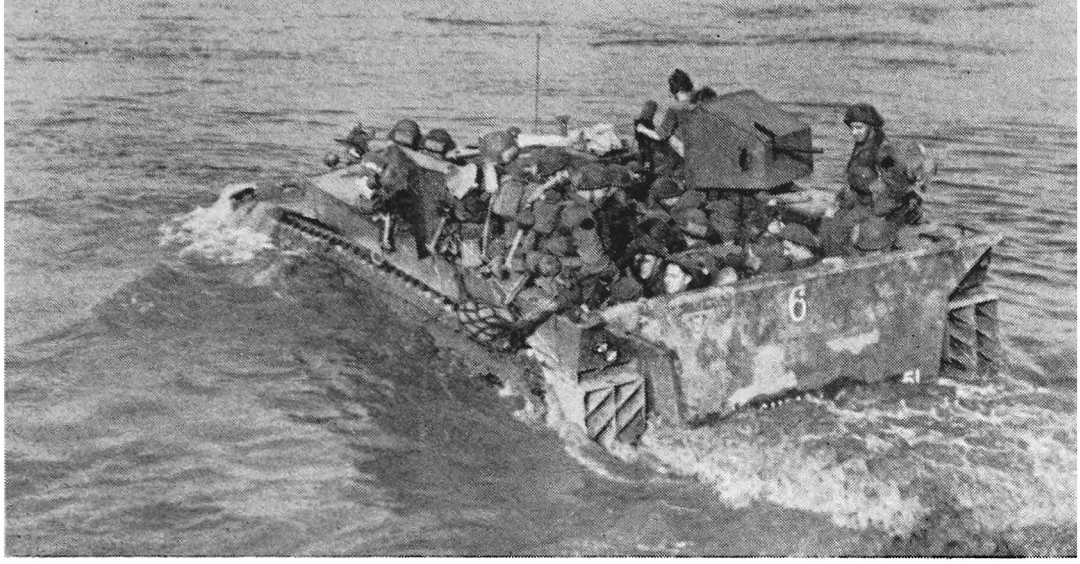
Recce Troop ...	1 to 11
AA Troop	12 to 17
Spare	18 and 19
RHQ	20 to 23
Spare	24 to 29
'A' Sq	30 to 49
'B' Sq	50 to 69
'C' Sq	70 to 89

VEHICLE MARKINGS—79th ARMOURED DIVISION—NOVEMBER 1944

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
HQ 79th Armd Div	40	Black
1019th FSRD		
30th Armd Bde		
Bde HQ	50	Red
22nd Dragoons	51	
4th RTR	55	
11th RTR	54	
1st Lothians...	52	
Westminster Dragoons	53	
31st Armd Bde		
Bde HQ	990	Green
7th RTR ... ... (Note 1)	991	
1st Fife and Forfar Yeo	992	
141st RAC	993	
RAC		
1st Canadian AC Regt	157	Green/Blue
49th APC Regt	158	
RE		
1st Assault Bde HQ	1232	Cobalt Blue
5th Assault Regt		
26th Assault Sq	1233	
77th Assault Sq		
79th Assault Sq		
6th Assault Regt		
81st Assault Sq	1234	
82nd Assault Sq		
87th Assault Dozer Sq	819	
284th Assault Sq	1234	
42nd Assault Regt		
16th Assault Sq	1235	
617th Assault Sq		
222nd Assault Sq		
149th Assault Park Sq	1236	
557th Assault Training and XP establishment	1238	

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
RAC		
264 Special Delivery Sq	472	Green/Blue
269th Forward Delivery Sq	472	Green/Blue with Tank Bde triangles
Royal Sigs		
79th Armd Div Sigs	40	Blue/White
HQ and No. 1 Sq		
30th Armd Bde Sigs	50	
31st Armd Bde Sigs	990	
1st Assault Bde RE Sigs	1232	
RASC		
HQ, RASC	80	Red/Green
502nd Coy RASC (Armd Bde)	81	
16th Coy RASC (Armd Bde)	1981	
109th Coy RASC Armd Div Troops	84	
MEDICAL		
16th Light Field Ambulance	89	Black
21st Light Field Ambulance	1541	
RAOC		
30th Armd Bde Ord Field Park	676	Blue/Red/Blue
31st Armd Bde Ord Field Park	136	
1st Assault Bde Ord Field Park	1232	
50th Inf Div Ord Field Park	92	
REME		
HQ, REME	40	Blue/Yellow/Red
865th Bde Workshop (Special)	97	
30th Bde Workshop (Special)	99	
31st Bde Workshop (Special)	990	
1st Assault Bde Workshop (Special)	1232	
69th Inf Bde Workshop	88	
825th Armd Troops Workshop (Type B)	1059	
827th Armd Troops Workshop (Type B)	1057	
828th Armd Troops Workshop (Type B)	1054	
829th Armd Troops Workshop (Type B)	1076	
49th APC Workshop	1451	
4th Recce Coy	1074	
POSTAL		
79th Armd Div Postal Unit	44	Black

Notes: (1) Replaced by 11th RTR which used number 67.
(2) Three- and four-number serials were Army, Army Group and GHQ allocations.



ABOVE: Given the unit serial numbers and knowing the division and its order of battle it becomes relatively easy to identify the unit operating any specific vehicle. This Buffalo of 79th Armoured Division has the unit number 51, the serial of the 22nd Dragoons, as can be verified from the table on the opposite page. The '6' is a local tactical number used within the regiment (IWM-BU2449).

VEHICLE MARKING—
INDEPENDENT ARMOURED BRIGADES AND TANK BRIGADES—1944

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour	Formation Sign
HQ 6th Guard's Tank Bde	151	Green, with White bar beneath	Originally Second Army later displaced by Bde mark
4th Tank Batt Gren Guards ...	152		
4th Tank Batt Cold'm Guards ...	153		
3rd Tank Batt Scots Guards ...	154		
HQ 34th Tank Bde	155		
147th RAC	156		
107th RAC	157		
153rd RAC ... ... (Note 1)	158		
HQ 31st Tank Bde ... (Note 2)	990		
7th RTR	991	Green, with diagonal White bar	
9th RTR	992		
141st RAC	993		
HQ 27th Armd Bde ... (Note 3)	50	Red	
13th/18th Hussars ... (Note 4)	51		
Staffordshire Yeo	52		
1st E. Riding Yeo ... (Note 5)	53		
90th Armd Bde Coy, RASC ...	81	Red/Green	
HQ 4th Armd Bde	121		Bde mark
3rd/4th CLY	122		
The Greys	123		
44th RTR	124		
2nd KRRC	125		
HQ 8th Armd Bde	993	(Note 6)	
4th/7th Dragoon Guards	994		
13th/18th Hussars	995		
Notts Yeo	996		
12th KRRC	475		
HQ 33rd Armd Bde ... (Note 7)	151		
1st Northants Yeo...	152		
144th RAC	153		
1st E. Riding Yeo	154		

Notes: (1) Replaced by 7th RTR in August 1944, who adopted the same serial number.
(2) Composition changed in August 1944—see 79th Armd Div.
(3) Split up in July 1944.
(4) Relieved 24th Lancers in 8th Armd Bde, July 1944.
(5) Transferred to 33rd Armd Bde in August 1944.
(6) Evidence indicates that Tank Bdes used a Green Arm of Service square, and Armd Bdes Red.
(7) Prior to August 1944, this Bde comprised 144th RAC (174); 148th RAC (175); 1st Northants Yeo (176).
(8) In early 1945, Tank Bdes were re-designated Armd Bdes, Type B, and adopted the normal Armd Bde numbers of 50–53.
(9) Tac signs in general conformed to Red, Yellow, Blue for the three regts in the Bde.

VEHICLE MARKINGS—INFANTRY DIVISIONS—1944

	Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
*HQ	Inf Div		Black
	Div HQ Defence and Employment Troop		Black
HQ	Div RA	40	Red/Blue
HQ	Div RE	40	Cobalt Blue
HQ	Div RASC	40	Red/Green
HQ	Div RAOC	40	Blue/Red/Blue
HQ	Div REME	40	Blue/Yellow/Red
	Div Field Security Sec		Black
*HQ	Inf Bde	81	Red
	Inf Bde HQ Ground Defence Plat	81	Red
	Inf Batt	55	Red
	Inf Batt	56	Red
	Inf Batt	57	Red
*	2nd Inf Bde, as above	87, 60, 61, 62	Green
*	3rd Inf Bde, as above	94, 67, 68, 69	Brown
RAC			
*	Recce Regt	41	Green/Blue
RA			
*	Field Regt	42	Red/Blue
*	Field Regt	43	Red/Blue
*	Field Regt	44	Red/Blue
*	A/T Regt	46	Red/Blue
	LAA Regt	47	Red/Blue
RE			
*	Field Park Coy	48	Cobalt Blue
	Field Coy	49	Cobalt Blue
	Field Coy	50	Cobalt Blue
	Field Coy	51	Cobalt Blue
	Div Bridging Plat	52	Cobalt Blue
Royal Sigs			
*	Inf Div Sigs	See Notes	White/Blue
INF			
	M/G Batt	64	Black
RASC			
	Inf Bde Coy	70	Red/Green
	Inf Bde Coy	71	Red/Green
	Inf Bde Coy	73	Red/Green
	Div Troops Coy	72	Red/Green
RAMC			
	Field Ambulance	75	Black
	Field Ambulance	76	Black
	Field Ambulance	77	Black
	Field Dressing Station	82	Black
	Field Dressing Station	83	Black
	Field Hygiene Sec	78	Black
RAOC			
	Inf Div Ord Field Park	92	Blue/Red/Blue
	Mobile Laundry and Bath Unit	52	Blue/Red/Blue
REME			
	Inf Bde Workshop	88	Blue/Yellow/Red
	Inf Bde Workshop	89	Blue/Yellow/Red
	Inf Bde Workshop	90	Blue/Yellow/Red
CMP			
	Inf Div Provost Coy	79	Black
MISC			
	Inf Div Postal Unit	80	Black
	Inf Div Battle School and Training Centre	81	Black

Notes applicable to Inf Divs, 1944, Armd Divs, 1944, and Corps Troops, 1944:

(1) Royal Sigs adopt the Serial number of the unit to which they were attached, but mostly used 40.

(2) Each of the asterisked units had a Light Aid Detachment who wore the Unit's number on REME colours.

(3) The LAA Regt had a Regt Workshop attached, displaying the Unit number on REME colours.

(4) RAOC Stores Carrying Sec wore the number of the Inf Batt W/S to which they were attached, on RAOC colours.

SECOND BRITISH ARMY—NOVEMBER 1944
VEHICLE NUMBER ALLOCATIONS IN INFANTRY DIVISIONS

Brigades		Parent Div
HQ — 94	on Brown	
Units — 67, 68, 69		
56th —	2nd Essex, 2nd Glos, 2nd SW Borderers	49th
147th —	11th Royal Scot Fus, 1st Leicester, 7th D of W Regt	49th
154th —	1st and 7th Black Watch, 7th Arg and Suth High'drs	51st
160th —	4th The Welch Regt, 6th Royal Welch Fus, 2nd Monm'th	53rd
185th —	2nd Warwick, 1st Norfolk, 2nd King's Shrop Light Inf	3rd
214th —	7th Somerset Light Inf, 1st Worcester, 5th Devon and Corn Light Inf ...	43rd
227th —	10th Highland Light Inf, 2nd Gordon High'drs, 2nd Arg and Suth High'drs	15th
231st —	2nd Devon, 1st Hampshire, 1st Dorset	50th
HQ — 87	on Green	
Units — 60, 61, 62		
9th —	2nd Lincolnshire, 1st King's Own Scottish Bord's, 2nd Royal Ulster Rifles	3rd
46th —	9th Cameronians, 7th Seaforth High'drs, 2nd Glasgow High'drs... ...	15th
130th —	7th Hampshire, 4th and 5th Dorset	43rd
146th —	4th Lincolnshire, 1st/4th King's Own Yorks Light Inf, Hallamshire Regt	49th
151st —	6th, 8th and 9th Durham Light Inf	50th
153rd —	5th Black Watch, 1st Gordon High'drs, 5th/7th Gordons	51st
158th —	1st East Lancashire, 1st/5th The Welch Regt, 7th Royal Welch Fus ...	53rd
HQ — 81	on Red	
Units — 55, 56, 57		
8th —	1st Suffolk, 2nd E. Yorkshire, 1st S. Lancashire	3rd
44th —	8th Royal Scots, 6th Royal Scots Fus, 6th King's Own Scot Bord's ...	15th
69th —	5th E Yorkshire, 6th and 7th Green Howards	50th
71st —	4th Royal Welch Fus, 1st Oxford and Bucks Light Inf, 1st Highland Light Inf	53rd
129th —	4th Somerset Light Inf, 4th and 5th Wiltshire	43rd
152nd —	2nd and 5th Seaforth High'drs, 5th Cameronians	51st

Note: When 56th Bde relieved 70th Bde in 49th Div (August 1944), both used the same numbers, but it is believed that 56th adopted the Red Arm of Service mark.

VEHICLE MARKINGS—THE SPECIAL SERVICE GROUP—1944

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
HQ SS Group	40	Black
1 RM Engr Cdo	49	Blue
SS Group Sigs	52	White/Blue
Group LAD	40	Blue/Yellow/Red
1 SS Bde	81	Red
Cdo	55	
Cdo	56	
Cdo	57	
Cdo	58	
2 SS Bde	87	Green
Cdo	59	
Cdo	60	
Cdo	61	
Cdo	62	
3 SS Bde	94	Brown
Cdo	66	
Cdo	67	
Cdo	68	
Cdo	69	
4 SS Bde ... ... (Note 3)	100	Red over Black horizontal
Cdo	92	
Cdo	93	
Cdo	95	
Cdo	96	
Group Postal Unit	80	Black
Group Provost Sec	79	Black
Group Field Security Sec	40	Black
SBU	41	Green/Blue
Holding Cdo	97	Black
Cdo Depot	98	Black
Cdo Mountain Warfare School	99	Black
Second Echelon	2E	Black

Notes: (1) Royal Sigs with Bdes within the Group wear the Bde number in Red on Royal Sigs Arm of Service colours.
(2) LADs carry the number of the formation to which they are attached on REME Arm of Service colours.
(3) Observe the Special Arm of Service colour.

ABOVE: Though the censor has obliterated the formation sign (probably of 15th (Scottish) Division), the unit number 61 identifies this Universal Carrier as being from the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Brigade in the division. Of interest here is what appears to be a metal disc with the air recognition sign displayed. RIGHT: Unit serial 90 identifies this Bedford 3-tonner as being from the 2nd Light Field Ambulance of an armoured division (IWM-B8525 and B6521).

VEHICLE MARKINGS—CORPS TROOPS—1940

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
Corps HQ	17	Black
Army Troops Coy RE	33	Cobalt Blue
Army Troops Coy RE	34	Cobalt Blue
Corps Sigs	17	White/Blue
Cavalry Regts	2	Green
M/G Batt	45	Red
Motor Ambulance Convoy RAMC	60	Black
Motor Ambulance Convoy RAMC	63	Black
Provost Coy CMP	68	Black
Sup Coln RASC	23	Black
Ammo Coy RASC	24	Red/Green
Ammo Park Coy RASC	25	(Note 2)
Pet Park Coy RASC	26	(Note 2)
Army Field Workshop	59	Black
Army Field Workshop	60	Black
Ord Field Park RAOC	15	Black
Intel Unit	17	Black
M/G Batt LAD	45	Black
Cavalry Regts LAD	2	Black
Med Regt RA	13	Red/Blue

Notes: (1) Additional Cavalry Regts allocated as required, using the serial numbers of Armd Regts of an Armd Div of the early establishment.
(2) Originally the mark was divded top left to bottom right, but after about 1940 the diagonal was reversed, although Red was always the uppermost colour.

VEHICLE MARKINGS—BASIC CORPS TROOPS AND INCREMENT FOR EACH DIVISION IN CORPS—1944

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
HQ Corps	17	Black
Corps HQ Defence Coy		
CBO and Staff		Red/Blue
RAC		
Armd Car Regt	44	Green/Blue
RA		
A/T Regt	2	Red/Blue
Survey Regt	10	
LAA Regt (Note 1)	14	
Air OP Squadron (Army and RAF)	25	
CB Troops (Note 1)	14	
RE		
HQ Corps Troops Engineers	33	Cobalt Blue
Field Park Coy	34	
E & M Sec, Type A		
Field Coy	35	
Field Coy	36	
Field Coy	37	
Royal Sigs		
Corps Sigs	41	White/Blue
RASC		
HQ Corps Troops Column RASC	50	Red/Green
Corps Troops Comp Coy	51	
Corps Troops Comp Coy	52	
MAC	64	
Corps Transport Coy	54	
RAMC		
Field Hygiene Sec	66	Black
Field Dressing Station	65	
Casualty Clearing Station	67	
Casualty Clearing Station	68	

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
RAOC		
HQCorps Troops RAOC	78	Blue/Red/Blue
Corps Troops Ord Field Park	75	
ML & BU Type A	72	
Increment ML & BU Type B	18	
ML & BU Type B	19	
ML & BU Type B	20	
Ord Ammunition Coy	13	
Ord Ammunition Coy	15	
Ord Ammunition Coy	16	
REME		
HQ Corps Troops REME	70	Blue/Yellow/Red
Corps Troops Workshop	71	
PAY CORPS		
Field Cash Office	76	Black
Increment Field Cash Office	60	
Field Cash Office	61	
Field Cash Office	62	
CMP		
Corps Provost Coy	83	Black
Corps Postal Unit	84	Black
Field Security Sec (Mobile)	86	Black
Pioneer Salvage Unit	85	Green/Black
HQ Corps Reception Camp	88	Black
Increment Div Sec Corps Recept Camp		
Div Sec Corps Recept Camp		
Div Sec Corps Recept Camp		

Notes: (1) LAA Regt was withdrawn and replaced by CB Troops in November 1944.

(2) The following units were also withdrawn from Corps at the same time:

CBO and Staff	The MAC
A/T Regt	Both CCS
Survey Regt	All three MLBU Type B
E & M Sec Type A	Incremental Field Cash Offices
All three Field Coys	Incremental Div Sec Corps Recept Camp
Both Corps Troops Comp Coys	

(3) The Services were reorganised thus:

RE	
HQ Corps Engineers Group	33
Field Park Coy	34
2 × Corps Engineer Regts	
Corps Field Park Coy	36
RASC	
HQ Corps Troops Colm	50
Corps HQ Carrier Coy	51
GT Coy	52
GT Coy, Heavy	64

VEHICLE MARKING—SOME AGRA ALLOCATIONS

Unit	Number	Arm of Service Colour
Medium Regts		
6th AGRA (Italy)		
66th	390	Red/Blue
75th (Shropshire Yeo)	392	
78th (Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeo)	394	
21st Army Group NWE		
65th	184	
68th	185	
75th (Scottish Horse)	186	
NW Europe		
2nd	385	
3rd	386	
HAA Regts		
103rd (UK)	285	
60th (NWE)	207	
Heavy Regts		
75th (Italy)	204	
56th (Italy)	254	
Mountain Regiments		
85th	380	
AGRA Troops		
5th	1190	

Note: For more detailed listing of AGRA unit serial numbers in 21 Army Group see special section on page 33.

BELOW: The tactical sign RE identifies this carrier AOP as that of 'E' Troop Commander. The following vehicle probably carries the tactical sign GE ('E' Troop Gun Position Officer) on its side doors. The formation sign and unit serial identify the unit as a regiment from a 2nd Army AGRA as can be checked from the table starting on the opposite page. The scene is Falaise, August 1944 (Canadian Official).

SOME UNIT SERIAL NUMBERS — GHQ, ARMY GROUP AND ARMY TROOPS
(NW Europe, June 1944)

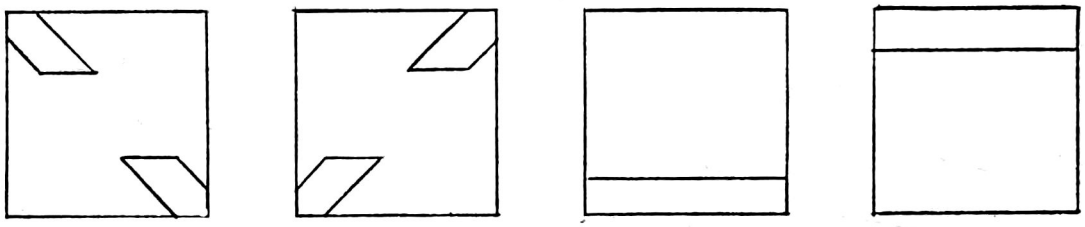
Serial Number	Position of White Bar (see notes)	Arm of Service	Formation Sign	Unit (where known)	Remarks
8	A	Black	HQ 21 A Gp	HQ 21 Army Gp	Formed in 1943 by conversion of GHQ Home Forces Serial No. 845
8	A	R Sigs	HQ 21 A Gp	21 Army Gp HQ Signals	Formed in 1943 by conversion of GHQ Home Forces Signals Serial No. 401
9	A	Black	21 Army Gp	Staff	
9	C	Black	2 Army	HQ 2nd Army	
			1 Can Army	HQ 1st Canadian Army	
9	C	R Sigs	2 Army	2nd Army HQ Signals	
			1 Can Army	1st Can Army HQ Signals	
9	C	RE	1 Can Army		
10	A	Black	HQ 21 A Gp	Staff (Canadian)	See Note (2)
11	A	Black	HQ 21 A Gp	Staff (Canadian)	See Note (2)
12	A	Black	21 Army Gp	Staff	
20	A	Black	HQ 21 A Gp	CMP	
25	C	RA	2 Army	Air Observation Post Sqn	The same serial number but with white bar at position 'D' was used by Corps troops
75	B	Black	21 Army Gp	RAMC	
151	C	Green	2nd Army	Tank Bde HQ	Numbers allocated to the first Tank Brigade in an Army
152	C	Green	2nd Army	} Tank Regiments	
153	C	Green	2nd Army		
154	C	Green	2nd Army		
155	C	Green	2nd Army and	Tank Bde HQ	Numbers allocated to the second Tank Brigade in an Army
156	C	Green	1st Can Army	} Tank Regiments	
157	C	Green			
158	C	Green			
162	C	RA	2nd Army	LAA Regt	Numbers allocated to an AA Brigade of Army troops
163	C	RA	2nd Army	LAA Regt	
164	C	RA	2nd Army		
165	C	RA	2nd Army		
166	C	RA	2nd Army		
173	C	RA	2nd Army and	AGRA HQ Regiments	Numbers allocated to the first AGRA of an Army (or Army Gp)
174	C	RA	21 Army Gp	,,	
175	C	RA		,,	
176	C	RA		,,	
177	C	RA		,,	
178	C	RA		,,	
179	C	RA		,,	
181	C	RA	2nd Army and	AGRA HQ Regiments	Numbers allocated to the second AGRA of an Army
182	C	RA	1st Canadian Army	,,	
183	C	RA		,,	
184	C	RA		,,	
185	C	RA		,,	
186	C	RA		,,	
187	C	RA		,,	
188	C	RA	2nd Army	AGRA HQ Regiments	Numbers allocated to the third AGRA of an Army
189	C	RA		,,	
190	C	RA		,,	
191	C	RA		,,	
192	C	RA		,,	
193	C	RA		,,	
194	C	RA		,,	
205	C	RA	2nd Army	AA	
206	A	RA	1 Corps	AA	
207	C	RA	2nd Army	AA	
210	B	RA	21 Army Gp	AA	
212	B	RA	21 Army Gp	AA	
216	B	RA	21 Army Gp	AA	
241	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
242	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
243	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
246	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
247	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
248	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
252	A	RA	1 Corps	LAA	
253	A	RA	1 Corps		
260	C	RA	1 Can Army	HAA Regiment, RCA	
261	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
282	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
305	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
310	B	RE	21 Army Gp		Serial 310 was also used by RE London District in 1941
312	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
316	B	RCE	21 Army Gp		
317	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
327	B	RE	21 Army Gp		'Road Maintenance'
330	B	RE	21 Army Gp	ME Coy, RE	Equipped with road construction plant

Serial Number	Position of White Bar (see notes)	Arm of Service	Formation Sign	Unit (where known)	Remarks
334	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
344	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
372	B	RCE	21 Army Gp		
386	B	RCE	21 Army Gp		
399	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
400	C	R Sigs			Used by London Dist Sigs, 1941
401	C	R Sigs			GHQ Home Forces HQ Sigs until converted to 21 Army Gp Sigs, 1943
403	C	R Sigs			Used in 1941-42
406	C	RCASC	1 Can Army		Army Troops transport Coys
407	C	RASC	2 Army		
408	C	RASC	2 Army		
412	C	RE	1 Can Army		
427	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
434	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
436	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
448	B	RCCS	21 Army Gp	No. 1 Canadian L of C HQ Sigs	Retained the same serial number when transferred from 1 Can Army to 21 Army Gp in 1943
449	C	R Sigs	2 Army	2 L of C HQ Signals	
472	None	Green/Blue	79 Armd Div	264 Special Delivery Sqn, RAC 269 Fwd Delivery Sqn, RAC	
473	None	Green/Blue	1 Polish Armd Div	1st Tank Replacement Sqn	
503	B	RASC	21 Army Gp	GT Coy	
528	A	RASC			Equipped with Mack articulated lorries
530	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
532	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
537	B	RASC	21 Army Gp	GT Coy	Equipped with Bedford QL articulated lorries
538	A	RASC	21 Army Gp	GT Coy	Equipped with Studibaker 5-ton articulated lorries
541	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		Equipped with Bedford OY petrol tankers
542	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
547	C	RCASC	1 Can Army		
558	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
578	C	RCASC	1 Can Army		
582	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
584	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		Equipped with Mack 3-ton trucks
589	C	RCASC	1 Can Army		
657	B	RAOC	21 Army Gp		
658	B	RAOC	21 Army Gp		
660	C	RCOC	1 Can Army		
676	None	RAOC	79 Armd Div	30 Armd Bde OFP	
679	B	RCEME	21 Army Gp		
759	C	Green	2nd Army		Also an attached R Sigs Section
761	B	PC	21 Army Gp		
780	None	PC			Used in 1941 by a PC unit of London Dist
819	None	RE	79 Armd Div	87 Assault Dozer Sqn	
843	A	Black	21 Army Gp	Staff	
845	B	Black	21 Army Gp	Staff, Canadian	Serial number used by GHQ Home Forces in 1941-43
846	A	RASC	21 Army Gp		
859	B	RASC	21 Army Gp	HQ Tank Transporter Column	
860	B	RASC	21 Army Gp	Tank Transporter Coy	
862	B	RASC	21 Army Gp	Tank Transporter Coy	
864	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
866	B	RCASC	21 Army Gp		
867	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
890	A	Black	21 Army Gp	Staff	
894	A	Black	HQ 21 Army Gp	Staff	
898	A	Black	21 Army Gp	Staff	
917	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
918	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
919	B	RE	21 Army Gp	873 ME Coy, RE	
944	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
960	B	RA	1 Corps	LAA Regiment	
979	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
984	B	RE	21 Army Gp	Bomb Disposal Unit	(BDS)
985	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
987	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
988	C	RE	2 Army	CRE	
992	B	RE	21 Army Gp		Also 1 Can Army
994	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
1001	C	RCEME	1 Can Army		
1006	B	REME	21 Army Gp		
1007	B	REME	21 Army Gp		
1015	B	REME	21 Army Gp		
1024	A	REME	21 Army Gp		

Serial Number	Position of White Bar (see notes)	Arm of Service	Formation Sign	Unit (where known)	Remarks
1027	B	REME	21 Army Gp		
1054	None	REME	79 Armd Div	828 Armd Tps Wksp	
1057	None	REME	79 Armd Div	827 Armd Tps Wksp	
1059	None	REME	79 Armd Div	825 Armd Tps Wksp	
1072	C	REME	2 Army		
1074	None	REME	79 Armd Div	4 Recovery Coy	
1076	None	REME	79 Armd Div	829 Armd Tps Wksp	
1102	C	RA	2 Army	LAA Regiment	
1103	C	RA	1 Can Army		
1106	B	Black	HQ L of C		
1108	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
1110	B	RA	21 Army Gp		
1113	C	RA	2 Army		
1114	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
1115	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
1118	A	RA	21 Army Gp		Also seen with 2 Army markings, white bar at position C
1121	B	RA	21 Army Gp		
1122	C	RA	2 Army		
1132	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
1136	B	RA	21 Army Gp		
1137	C	RA	2 Army		
1142	B	RA	21 Army Gp	LAA Regiment, RA	
1145	C	RA	1 Can Army	LAA Regiment, RA	RA not RCA
1152	B	RA	21 Army Gp		
1154	B	RA	21 Army Gp		
1159	B	RA	21 Army Gp	LAA Regiment, RA	
1160	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
1173	B	RA	21 Army Gp	54 LAA Regt (9A and SH)	
1177	B	RA	8th Arm Bde	147 Fd Regt RA (Essex Yeo)	
1190	C	RA	2 Army	AGRA Troops	
1191	C	RA	2 Army	HQ 5 AGRA	
1192	C	RA	2 Army		
1193	C	RA	2 Army	Medium Regiments RA	
1194	C	RA	2 Army		
1195	C	RA	2 Army		
1200	A	RA	21 Army Gp		
1207	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
1209	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
1210	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
1211	C	RCE	1 Can Army		
1214	C	RE	2 Army		
1224	B	RCE	21 Army Gp		
1225	B	Black	21 Army Gp		
1232	None	RE	79 Armd Div	HQ 1 Assault Bde, RE	
1233	None	RE	79 Armd Div	5 Assault Regt, RE	Red tac signs
1234	None	RE	79 Armd Div	6 Assault Regt, RE	
1235	None	RE	79 Armd Div	42 Assault Regt, RE	Blue tac signs
1236	None	RE	79 Armd Div	149 Assault Park Sqn, RE	Blue tac signs, yellow digit
1237	None	RE	79 Armd Div		Red tac signs
1238	None	RE	79 Armd Div	557 Assault Trg & Exper Est	
1240	A	RE	21 Army Gp		
1243	A	RE	21 Army Gp		
1245	A	RE	21 Army Gp		
1250	B	RE	21 Army Gp		
1274	D	RE	Beach Gps		Reason for white bar in Corps position not kown
1288	A	RE	HQ L of C		
1300	B	RE	HQ L of C		
1303	A	RCASC	21 Army Gp		
1317	A	RASC	21 Army Gp		Pontoon Unit
1318	A	RASC	21 Army Gp		
1346	B	RASC	Beach Gps	GT Coy, RASC	DUKW Coy
1351	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		Petrol Unit
1353	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
1360	A	RASC	21 Army Gp	20 Transport Coy, RASC	Air freight unit
1368	A	RASC	21 Army Gp		
1376	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
1379	C	RASC	No sign		
1381	B	RASC	21 Army Gp	322 Transport Coy, RASC	
1392	B	RASC	21 Army Gp	GT Coy, RASC	DUKW Coy
1394	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		Bulk petrol
1397	B	RASC	21 Army Gp		
1400	C	CMP	2 Army		
1406	B	CMP	21 Army Gp	Traffic Control	'TC' incorporated in Serial No. marking and 'Traffic Control' in red on white painted on front of each vehicle
1419	B	CMP	21 Army Gp	Traffic Control	
1446	B	Black	HQ L of C		
1451	None	REME	79 Armd Div	49 Armd Personnel Carrier Wksp	
1460	A	R Sigs	Air Formation Sigs	Air Formation Signals	
1462	B	R Sigs	21 Army Gp	12 L of C HQ Signals	
1494	A	R Sigs	21 Army Gp		
1541	None	RAMC	79 Armd Div	21 Light Fd Ambulance	

Serial Number	Position of White Bar (see notes)	Arm of Service	Formation Sign	Unit (where known)	Remarks
1610	A	PC	21 Army Gp		
1611	B	PC	21 Army Gp		
1658	B	Black	21 Army Gp	Canadian	
1725	B	RASC	Beach Gps	Transport Coy, RASC	
1821	B	PC	21 Army Gp		
1936	B	Black	21 Army Gp		
1981	None	RASC	79 Armd Div	16 Coy RASC (Armd Bde)	
2651	C	PC	21 Army Gp		

Notes: (1) Position of white bar. For the purposes of this table only, the following letters have been used to denote the position of the white bar



A GHQ, Garrison and Area Troops

B Army Group Troops

C Army Troops

D Corps Troops

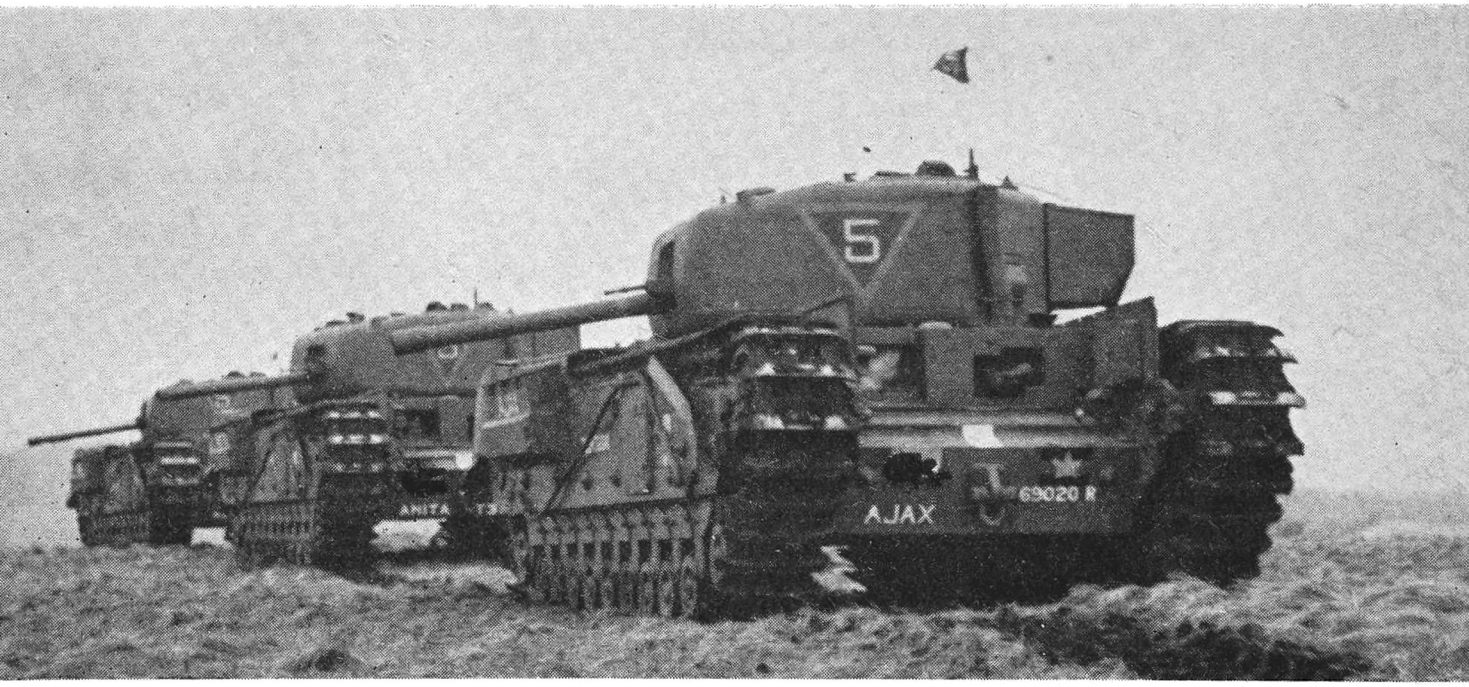
(2) In the case of R Signals and RCCS units the white bar became red from about late 1943 onwards. It was then the same colour as the unit serial number. About the same time LAD's REME attached to R Signals units started to paint both the unit serial and the bar in red on REME colours. Interface between the reds was achieved by a white or yellow outline to the number and the bar.

(3) These units carried two formation signs adjacent to each other; HQ 21 Army Gp sign and CM HQ sign a few inches apart.

(4) HQ 21 Army Gp sign was usually a transfer on a chocolate brown or black square. 21 Army Gp sign was however painted, usually with a stencil.

(5) See also Table of 79 Arm Div for additional units with numbers in the three and four figure series.

Churchills of the Canadian Army Tank Brigade in February 1943. Notice the number 5 in the tactical triangle, and that in this case the latter is painted point downwards. The arm of service number (173) is one of the Army Group series, and the tanks have the infantry red/white/red marking on the hull sides and on the glacis plate—the white is clearly visible. (The unit serial 173 has been censored but can be read from the original print.) (Canadian Official).



Appendices

1: Arm of Service Strips

Introduced in 1940; a coloured strip of cloth,
2 inches in length and worn below the formation badge on the sleeves of the battledress blouse.
Bi- and tri-coloured strips were divided vertically into equal parts.

Unit	Colour
RAC	Yellow/Red
RA	Red/Blue
RE	Blue/Red
Royal Sigs	Blue/White
Infantry (except Rifle Regt)s	Scarlet
Rifle Regiments	Rifle Green
Army Chaplains Dept	Purple
RASC	Yellow/Blue
RAMC	Dull Cherry
RAOC	Red/Blue/Red
REME	Red/Yellow/Blue
RMP	Red
Royal Army Pay Corps	Yellow
Royal Army Educational Corps	Cambridge Blue
Royal Army Dental Corps	Green/White
Royal Pioneer Corps	Red/Green
Intelligence Corps	Green
Army PT Corps	Black/Red/Black
Army Catering Corps	Grey/Yellow

Notes: (1) Infantrymen wore one scarlet strip below the Div Formation sign if their regt was in the senior inf bde, two strips if in the second senior bde and three strips if in the third (junior) bde.

(2) Observe that both RAC and RASC used colours later adopted for the Arm of Service mark; that the Royal Pioneer Corps used Red/Green, and that RAOC colours were the reverse of those of their vehicle marks.

2: Brigades which served in the 79th Armoured Division

Brigade	Regiments	Equipment	Remarks
1st Tank	11th RTR	Originally CDL,	
	42nd RTR	but later converted	
	49th RTR	to Buffaloes and Kangaroos	
1st Assault Bde, RE	5th		
	6th		
	42nd	AVREs	
	Assault Regt, RE		
4th Armd	Royal Scots Greys		
	3/4th CLY	Sherman DDs	Independent bde equipped with DDs for the Rhine crossing
	44th RTR		
	2nd KRRC (Motor Batt)		
27th Armd	13/18th Royal Hussars		
	1st East Riding Yeo	Sherman DDs	Normandy Landing
	Staffordshire Regt		
30th Armd	22nd Dragoons		
	1st Lothian and Border Horse	Sherman Crabs	Minesweeping and flame throwing bde
	2nd CLY		
	141st Reg, RAC	Crocodiles	
31st Tank	7th RTR		
	9th RTR	Crocodiles	Withdrawn in August 1944
	144th RAC		
33rd Armd	1st Northants Yeo		
	144th RAC	Buffaloes	144th transferred to 31st Bde
	148th RAC		148th left in August 1944
	1st East Riding Yeo		1st East Riding relieved 148th
	1st Canadian APC Regt	Kangaroos	Equipped mainly with Rams and Priests
	1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry	Crocodiles	From October 1944

3 : Typical Armoured Division Strength (8 Corps)

(AS AT JUNE 1944)

Unit	7th Armd Div	11th Armd Div	Guards Armd Div	Principal Equipment	Remarks
Armd Car Regt	11th Hussars	The Inns of Court Regt	2nd Household Cavalry Regt	67 Armoured cars 67 Scout cars	Daimlers (basic car) AECs (heavy troops) Staghounds (HQ car) Daimler and Humber scout cars M3 Half-tracks in sq support troop
Divisional HQ				8 Cruisers	Cromwells in 7th, Shermans in Guards and 11th Armd
Armd Recce Regt	8th King's Royal Irish Hussars	2nd Northants Yeo	2nd Armd Recce Batt, Welsh Guards	40 Cruisers 6 CS tanks 30 Light tanks 5 AA tanks 8 Scout cars	Cromwells Challengers Honeys, Crusader AA, Centaur AA
Armd Bde HQ	22nd Armd Bde	29th Armd Bde	5th (Guards) Armd Bde	7 Cruisers 8 OP tanks, 2 AA tanks	As Div HQ above
Armd Regt	4th CLY	23rd Hussars	2nd (Armd) Batt, Grenadier Guards	55 Cruisers 6 CS tanks	Cromwells and Fireflies in 7th, Shermans and Fireflies in Guards and
Armd Regt	1st RTR	2nd Fife and Forfar Yeo	1st (Armd) Batt, Coldstream Guards	11 Light tanks 6 AA tanks	11th Armd Divs: Comets were issued to 11th Armd after the
Armd Regt	5th RTR	3rd RTR	2nd (Armd) Batt, Irish Guards	8 Scout cars (in each regt)	Rhine crossing Most AA tanks withdrawn soon after D-Day
Motor Batt	1st Batt, The Rifle Bde	8th Batt, The Rifle Bde	1st (Motor) Batt, Grenadier Guards	80 carriers and half-tracks	Universal carriers M3 Half-tracks
Inf Bde	131st Inf Bde	159th Inf Bde	32nd Guards Bde		
Regt	1/5th Queen's	3rd Batt, Monmouths	5th Batt, Coldstream Guards	2" and 3" mortars 6 pdr AT guns	
Regt	1/6th Queen's	4th Batt, KSLI	3rd Batt, Irish Guards		
Regt	1/7th Queen's	1st Batt, Herefords	1st Batt, Welsh Guards		
Independent M/G Coy	No. 3 Support Group, Royal Northumberland Fus	2nd Independent M/G Coy, Royal Northumberland Fus	1st Independent M/G Coy, Royal Northumberland Fus	Vickers M/Gs and 4·2" mortars	
Royal Artillery	3rd RHA 5th RHA 15th LAA Regt, RA 65th A/T Reg, RA	151st Field Regt, RA 13th RHA 58th LAA Regt, RA 75th A/T Regt, RA	55th Field Regt, RA 153rd Field Regt, RA 94th LAA Regt, RA 21st A/T Regt, RA	24 (towed) 25 pdrs 24 Sextons 54 Bofors 48 17 pdr A/T guns	18 Bofors were SP 24 17 pds were SP (Achilles or Archer)

Note: In addition, each div had its own supporting services, ie, RE, Signals, RASC, RAMC, RAOC, REME, RCMP.

4 : Infantry Regts—NW Europe

RIFLE BATTALION

Regt HQ

Support Coy with:
Mortar Plat: 6 × 3″ mortars
Carrier Plat: 13 × carriers
A/T Plat: 6 × pdrs
Assault Pioneers

4 × Rifle Coys—each with:
3 × Platoons—each with:
3 × Sections—each with:
10 men
1 × LMG

MOTOR BATTALION

Regt HQ

Support Coy with:
3 × A/T Plats
2 × Medium M/G Plats
3 × Motor Coy—each with:
3 × Plats (15 cwt trucks)
1 × Flat (carriers)

Note: Frequently employed half-tracks.

RECCE REGIMENTS (Inf Divs only)

Regt HQ (1 × Armd Car)

HQ Squadron with:
A/T Batt (8 × 6 pdr)
Mortar Troop (6 × 3″)
Signals Troop
Admin Troop

4 × Squadrons—each with:
HQ (Each with light recce cars armd cars and carriers)
Troop
Troop
Troop
Assault Troop (Riflemen in half-tracks)

5: Armoured Regts—NW Europe

ARMOURED REGIMENT

Regt HQ (4 × tanks)

HQ Squadron with:
Troop Admin
Troop Intercom (8 × scout cars)
Troop Recce (11 × Lt tanks)
Troop A/A (4 × 20 mm A/A tanks)

4 × Squadrons—each with:
HQ (4 tanks)
Troop
Troop
Troop
Troop
Troop
(Each 3 tanks)

Note: Sqs later reorganised to:
HQ Troop Troop Troop Troop
(Each 3 tanks and 1 'Firefly)

ARMOURED CAR REGIMENT

Regt HQ (3 × armd cars)

HQ Squadron with:
Troop (5 × armd cars with 20 mm AA guns)
Troop (Intercom—13 scout cars)
Troop Admin
HQ (4 × Staghounds)

4 × Squadrons—each with:
5 × Troops (Each 2 armd cars 2 scout cars)
Heavy Troop (2 × AEC armd cars)
Support Troop (Riflemen in half-tracks)

Note: Basic armd car was Daimler.

6 : Royal Artillery—NW Europe

FIELD REGTS

Battery: Troop Troop (4 × 25 pdrs, tractor or SP)
Battery: Troop Troop
Battery: Troop Troop

MEDIUM REGTS

Battery: Troop Troop 4 × 5·5″ (tractor)
Battery: Troop Troop

HEAVY REGTS

Battery: 4 × 7·2″ How
Battery: 4 × 7·2″ How
Battery: 4 × US 155 mm
Battery: 4 × US 155 mm

LIGHT AA REGTS

Battery: Troop Troop Troop (Each 6 × 40 mm)
Battery: 3 × Troops
Battery: 3 × Troops

HEAVY AA REGTS

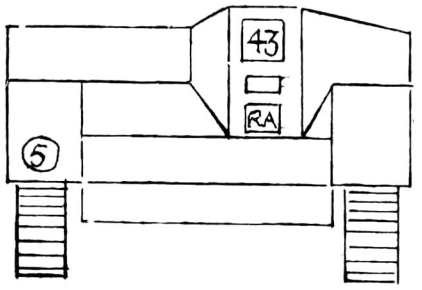
Battery: Troop Troop (Each 4 × 3·7″)
Battery: Troop Troop
Battery: Troop Troop

A/T REGTS

Battery: Troop *4 × 6 pdrs; Troop 4 × 17 pdrs; Troop 4 × 17 pdrs
Battery: 3 × Troops
Battery: 3 × Troops
Battery: 3 × Troops

*Only in Inf Divs. Armed Divs had 17 pdr.

7: Typical Vehicle Marking Positions



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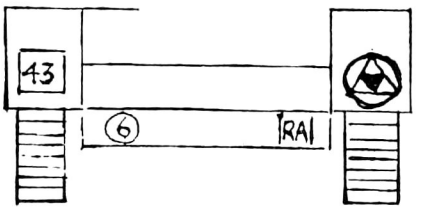

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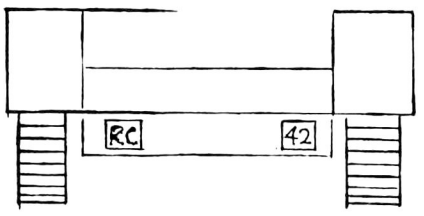

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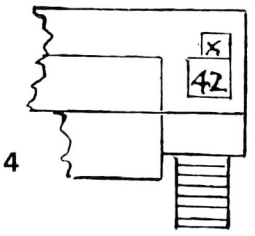

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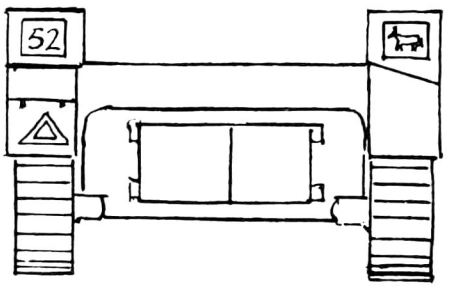

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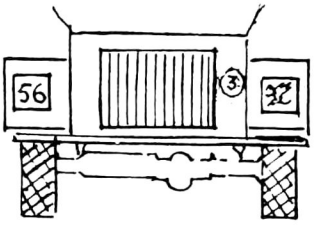

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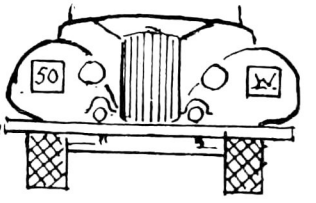

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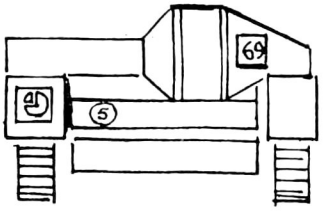

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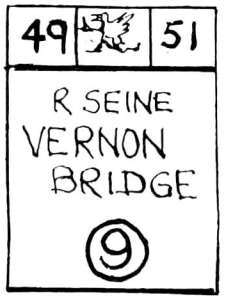

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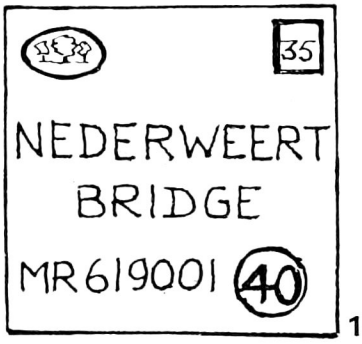
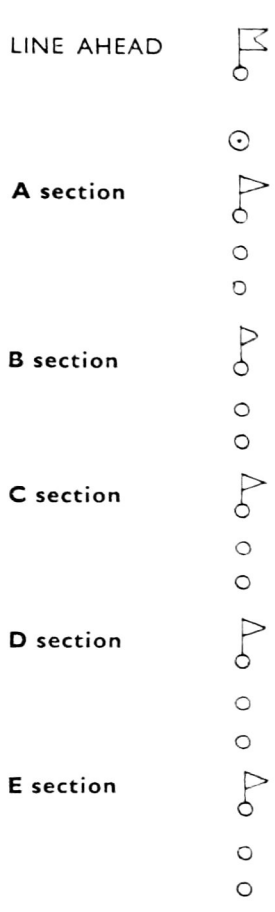
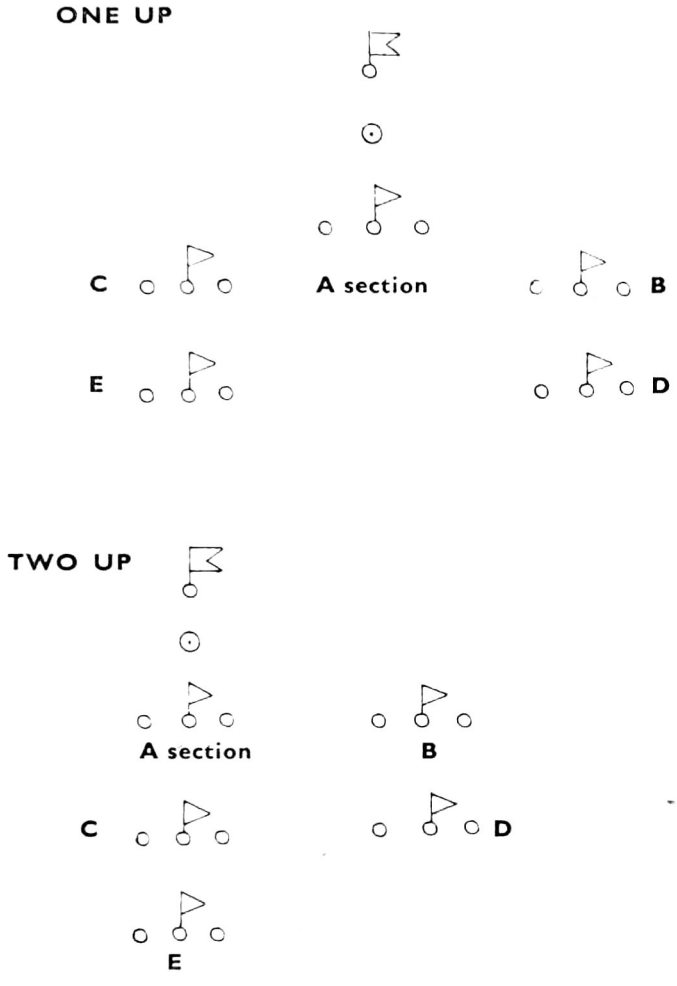


10

(1, 2, 3) Typical Troop Commander's Carrier marks of Field Regts, RA, in an Infantry Division. (4) Rear view of a Battery Commanders Carrier OAP. (5) Priest Kangaroo of Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, 9th Armoured Brigade (rear view). (6) Bedford truck of 4th Battalion The Wiltshire Regiment, 129 Infantry Brigade, 43rd (Wessex) Division. (7) Humber car of 2nd Field Company RE, 53rd (Welsh) Division. (8) Carrier of 2/4th Battalion The Hampshire Regiment, 28 Infantry Brigade, 4th Division. (9) Signboard of Class 9 bridge erected over River Seine at Vernon by two field companies RE, 43rd (Wessex) Division. (10) Signboard of Class 40 Bailey bridge over Zuid Willems canal constructed by 12 Corps troops engineers. (Drawings not to scale.)

8 : Company Formation in Army Tank Units, 1939





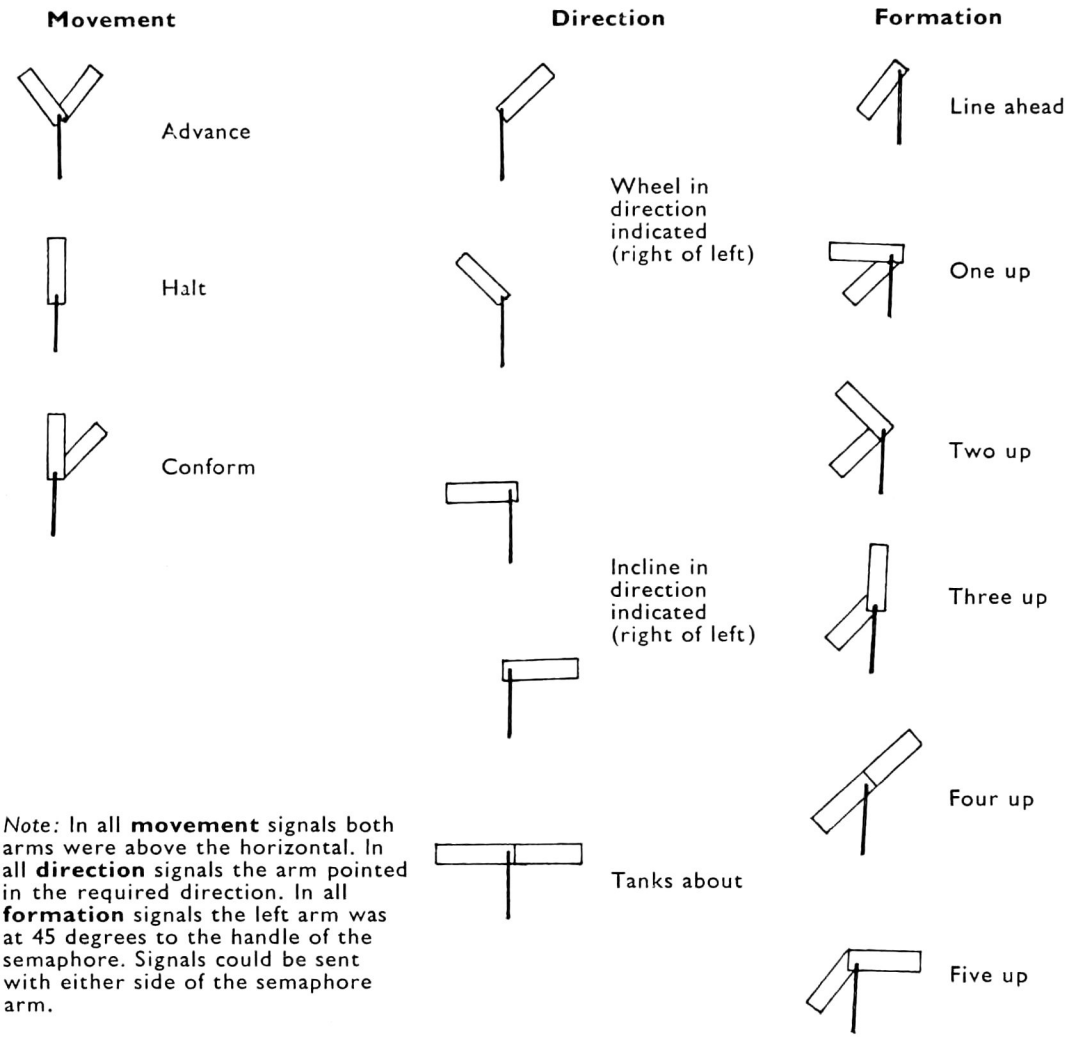
Motor Transport

1 × 4-seater car
1 × 2-seater car
6 × motor cycles
1 × carrier
1 × 15-cwt wireless van
1 × 15-cwt office truck

Company H.Q.

1 × 4 seater car
5 × motor cycles
1 × carrier

9 : Semaphore Code in Army Tank Units, 1939



Note: In all **movement** signals both arms were above the horizontal. In all **direction** signals the arm pointed in the required direction. In all **formation** signals the left arm was at 45 degrees to the handle of the semaphore. Signals could be sent with either side of the semaphore arm.

10 : Miscellaneous Signs

HOME GUARD UNITS

WD type vehicles used by Home Guard units carried the district, area or other command sign in the normal position. The unit was indicated by a light grey diamond with the unit title in abbreviated form painted in dark blue lettering. Example shown is 3rd Essex Battalion. This sign was in the usual unit sign position.

TRAINING SCHOOL VEHICLES

These carried a square sign divided into four quarters, 1st and 4th quarters red, remainder white, with abbreviated title of the school in a white bar above the square.

TRAINING AND ADMINISTRATION UNIT VEHICLES

These carried a unit sign appropriate to the arm of service with the abbreviated title of the unit in a white bar above the sign.

BOMB DISPOSAL VEHICLES

These had all mudguards painted signal red and the legend 'B.D.S.' in red showing to the front.

THE AUTHOR

Peter Hodges is a life-long modeller of naval and military subjects and is well known as a regular contributor to *Airfix Magazine*. He has also written for other specialist modelling magazines over the years. He has long studied the subject of this book, becoming interested initially when he was seeking marking details for model tanks. Peter Hodges is equally interested in naval matters and is author of another Almark book *Battle Class Destroyers* and a forthcoming title in the series *Tribal Class Destroyers*.

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